

# Regional News

*Eyes on Wellington*

Issue 260

January 27, 2026





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## News

### Addictive decadence



Fully committed to living a lifestyle outside of his means, Marshall Lorenzo presents *Decadunce* – a brand-new comedy show coming to BATS Theatre between the 19th and 21st of February as part of the 2026 New Zealand Fringe Festival that dives headfirst into the murky waters of fraud, excess, and stupidity.

*Decadunce* is the final chapter – or rather, the dessert – of the award-winning Kiwi comedian’s *Baby Gorgeous* sketch trilogy, which saw the 2024 eponymous first saga as the amuse-bouche and 2025’s *Baby Gorgeous Build Ups* as the main course. This final instalment is served up as the cherry on top, and boy will it be a decadent and dizzying display that’s one gun law away from eating the rich.

Lorenzo is ready to pull the trigger, with *Decadunce* all about finding loopholes in the capitalist snake oil, fighting for bargains, and blowing off steam around the cost of living. Featuring various unforgettable characters, including the Briscoes lady, beware of biting commentary on the dilapidated state of it all.

Don’t worry, you’re in good hands with comedy chef Lorenzo, who trained at the Second City Conservatory – where Catherine O’Hara, Steve Carell, Amy Poehler, and many more stars got their start – before being nominated and awarded for a cornucopia of accolades and dishing out zingers aplenty as the head writer of the multi-Canadian Comedy Award-winning troupe The Sketchersons. Come hungry and you will be satiated, but not for long. *Decadunce* is highly addictive.

### Behold the heavens



Many Kiwis haven’t had the opportunity to see the Vatican or Sistine Chapel in person, but this summer, Michelangelo’s frescoes have come to the capital’s Tākina Wellington Convention and Exhibition Centre in an exhibition that has been so popular, it has been extended by two weeks until the 22nd of February when it must close.

Under licence from the Vatican Museums, *Michelangelo – A Different View* offers a transformative experience that allows attendees to experience the 16th-century Florentine’s work from an entirely new, wholly immersive perspective. Instead of looking up in awe at the frescoes, guests look down at an almost original-size reproduction of *The Genesis* as well as get up close and personal with a 5.4-metre-square version of *The Last Judgment* and 50-odd other framed photo-mechanically reproduced frescoes. 14 further works by Sandro Botticelli, Pietro Perugino, Domenico Ghirlandaio, and Cosimo Rosselli provide additional historical background and insight into the epoch.

From just two metres away, visitors can admire the intricate details of the master’s work, experiencing Michelangelo’s interpretations of the Bible’s creation story in a new way through personal device audio guides. Christopher Longhurst, a theologian and aesthete who served for 17 years at the Sistine Chapel, St Peter’s Basilica, and the Vatican Museums’ Papal Art Galleries, will also be leading VIP tours throughout the exhibition’s run.

“Born out of an idea from The Stetson Group to give New Zealanders a different view of Michelangelo’s ceiling and altar wall, this exhibition offers unique significance for Aotearoa,” Longhurst says, adding that this up-close view of one of art history’s most extraordinary, complex, and timeless visual masterpieces touches “the points of intersection between art and science, faith and reason, antiquity and modernity, Māori mythology and the Bible”.

*Michelangelo – A Different View* invites visitors “to take a step back in time”, WellingtonNZ CE Mark Oldershaw says. “As the nation’s creative heart, we’re proud to be supporting such a unique exhibit at Tākina, which combines centuries-old fresco masterpieces with modern-day technology to deliver the closest experience to the Sistine Chapel outside of Vatican City.”

Cover: *Fat Freddy’s Drop*. Artwork by *Fat Freddy’s Drop*

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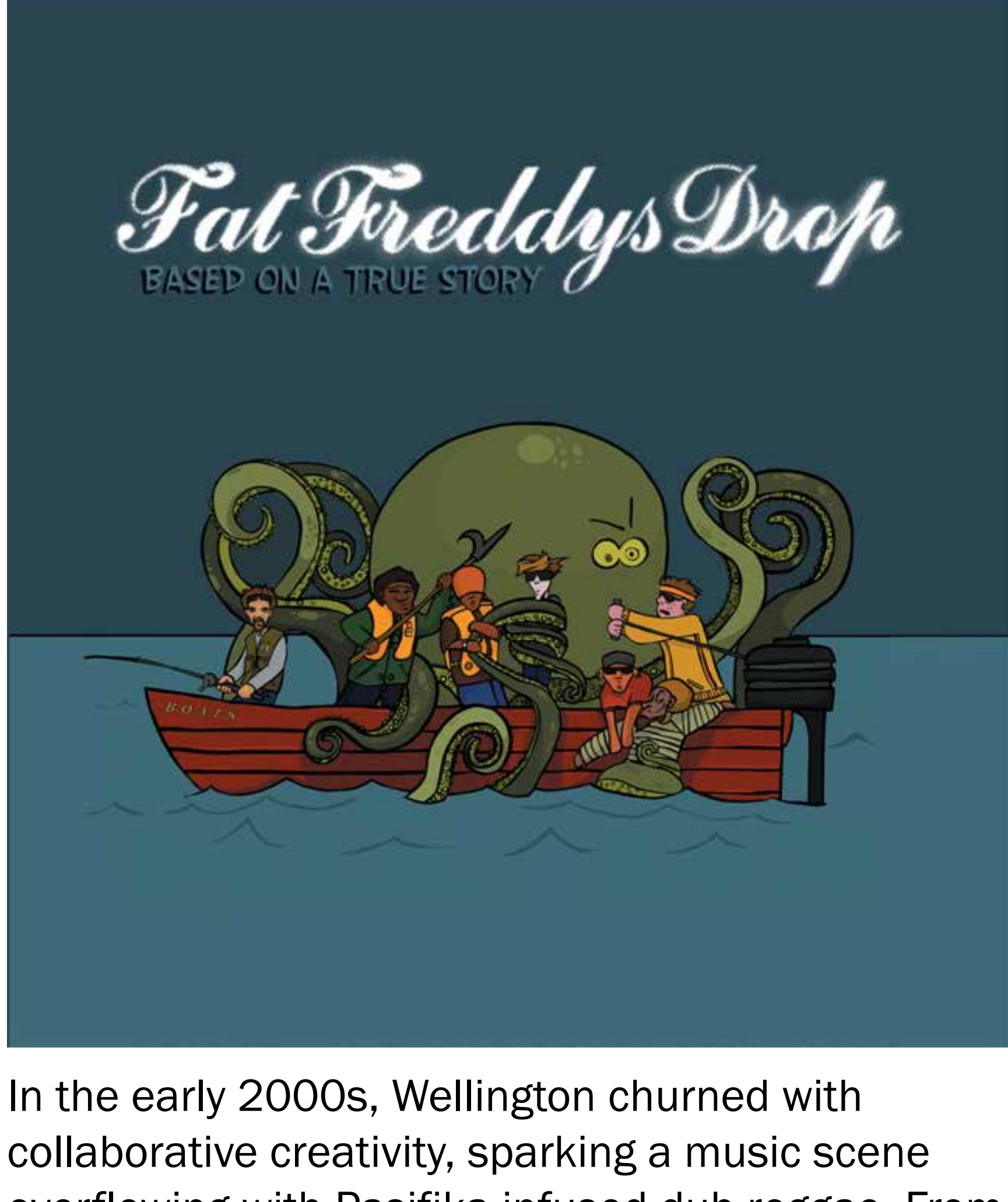
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## Creative cauldron



In the early 2000s, Wellington churned with collaborative creativity, sparking a music scene overflowing with Pasifika-infused dub reggae. From this cauldron, Fat Freddy’s Drop boiled over and their first album, *Based on a True Story*, was born.

Te Waka Huia Wellington Museum has opened *Based On A True Story: The 20th Anniversary Exhibition*, a vibrant tribute to this first studio album. Running until the 8th of March, the show takes fans inside the making and success of the country’s longest-charting album.

A colourful convergence of the music, art, and people that make up the band and the album, the exhibition features DJ Mu’s Akai MPC 2000, Tony Chang’s cornet, Dobie Blaze’s Korg keyboard, and Fulla Flash’s 1958 saxophone.

There’s fun nostalgia too. The exhibition includes the original fish ‘n’ chip menu painted by Otis Frizzell for the award-winning *Wandering Eye* music video, Hopepa’s famous All Star yellow tracksuit, original album art concept drawings, behind-the-scenes footage, and more.

“We’ve even got their music awards collection, set up as if in Freddy’s studio where they were kept on shelves above the kitchen sink,” curator Ian Wards says. “I wanted people to feel like they were stepping into the album.”

Fat Freddy’s Drop have been integral creative partners to the look and feel, with current saxophonist Chopper Reeds (Scott Towers) saying the exhibition “shows what is important to us: food, whānau, and our links to the city and the coast that surrounds it. It really feels like a high five to the Wellington music scene and the city as a whole”.

Just before the exhibition comes to a close, the museum will host the free event *Soul Connections* on the 7th of March. While the iconic band won’t be performing, visitors will hear deep grooves inspired by the tracks from DJs and musicians within the wider Fat Freddy whānau.

*Based on a True Story* is a tale of Wellington, the people, the place, and its creative soul, but it’s also a story of Aotearoa and our music. Wellington Museum is open daily from 10am to 5pm, with free entry for New Zealand residents. More information is available at [wellingtonmuseum.nz](http://wellingtonmuseum.nz)

## Comedy and cutlery collide



**Photo by Scott Maxim.**

Consider the humble kitchen spoon. So soft, so harmless, so spoonous...

But what actually is a spoon? Does a spork count? Can a clown be a spoon?

Armed with nothing but roughly 100 spoons, Daniel Nodder is bound and determined to crack into the chaotic world of cutlery with his new comedic solo performance *Spoon Show*.

Following its sold-out development season at New Zealand Fringe Festival 2025, this spoon-tacular sophomore work returns as part of Fringe 2026, setting the table at The Gods Paramount for a comedic feast between the 18th and 21st of February.

“It’s a show about this clown’s absurd obsession with spoons,” Nodder says. “But it’s really a celebration of imagination, joy, and having fun with the people around you.”

The clown of the hour? That’s none other than Fumble, Nodder’s clown persona who they discovered during a sweaty, cheesy, and ultimately rewarding month at the internationally revered (and feared) Ecolé Philippe Gaulier in France.

With a fool’s brain, a dancer’s body, and a determination usually reserved only for the truly idiotic, Fumble jokes, dances, juggles (badly), sings, and invites their audience to join the show, creating an unforgettable hour of ridiculous comedy.

With quirky sound design and original composition by Ben Kelly and clever production design by Rebekah de Roo, *Spoon Show* comes fresh off the back of Nodder’s 2025 World of WearableArt® performance as the crowd-favourite Street Sweeper who bridged the gaps between fashion categories with a combination of clown and physical theatre.

The Fringe regular’s previous credits also include *ratKing* (winner of the 2023 Fringe Award for Grand Design) and their multi-award-winning solo *Only Bones – Daniel Nodder*, a comedic exploration of the creation of the universe told only through movement, which has been touring internationally since 2023.

From an airplane to an embrace, a sword to a musical instrument, every possible use for a spoon will be tried and tested with a scoop of childlike wonder and a spoonful of imagination.

## SNIPS

### One door closes

Te Awe Library on Brandon Street will close permanently on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March in preparation for the reopening of Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui a fortnight later. Celebrations for the grand reopening of the Central Library will be held on Saturday the 14<sup>th</sup> of March.

### Motorcycle parking

Wellington City councillors have agreed to revoke the decision to introduce a \$1p/h parking fee for motorcycles in the CBD.

“Wellington was set to be the only city in New Zealand that charged for motorcycle parking. That’s not a good look for a city that wants to encourage different and more climate-friendly transport options into the city”, Deputy Mayor Ben McNulty says.

### Surcharges low

Consumer NZ says card payment surcharges should now be down to about 1 percent as interchange fees have reduced. Any businesses paying more than this for Visa or Mastercard should shop around for a better deal.

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# William who?



**Photo by Alex Rabina Photography.**

Stagecraft opens its 2026 season with a production about one of the greatest playwrights of all time – and how we nearly didn’t know him at all.

“Most of us will be familiar with Shakespeare’s plays, but many people don’t know how close these plays were to being lost to time”, *The Book of Will* director Janet Noble says. “While Shakespeare published his sonnets during his lifetime, he never published his plays. Few playwrights did. It’s a wonder we have them at all.”

Running at Gryphon Theatre from the 4th to the 14th of February, Lauren Gunderson’s *The Book of Will* is both a love letter to theatre and a celebration of the friends who ensured the Bard’s words would survive. It opens several years after Shakespeare’s death and follows two of his dearest friends, John Heminges and Henry Condell, on their four-year journey to collect and publish his plays – 14 comedies, 10 histories, and 11 tragedies – in their “true and correct” form. Easier said than done!

While historical in context, the script is modern in approach and language, making for a clever and engaging exploration of the creation of the *First Folio*.

“I love this play,” Noble continues, adding that it’s been in the back of her mind as a show she’d love to direct ever since she saw the world premiere in Denver, Colorado in early 2017. “I’m so excited to have the opportunity to bring *The Book of Will* to Wellington audiences this summer.”

## Something to celebrate



Wellington’s south coast will come alive in the colourful, vibrant, and diverse Tapu Te Ranga Island Bay Festival at the end of summer, presenting a schedule chocka with exciting artists, beloved traditions, and fun events between the 8th and 14th of February.

Day in the Bay is the heart of the festival on the 8th. It’s a day full of connection and celebration where locals and visitors enjoy markets and music, food and fun, performances and plenty more. Don’t forget the Blessing of the Boats at 2pm!

The 13th is reserved for Tangata Manu Birdman Beach Party, when brave competitors launch their homemade flying contraptions (and sometimes themselves) off the wharf. Bring food and your whānau to enjoy the flyers and the stacked entertainment lineup.

The annual Garage Sale and Swap Day will see garage sales pop up throughout the suburb and a clothes swap within the community centre on the 14th.

Speaking of sustainability, Island Bay Festival is setting the standard in Aotearoa when it comes to eco-events. The community is deeply committed to protecting Papatūānuku and Tangaroa and has taken real action in partnership with Nonstop Solutions to reduce waste by embracing sustainable materials. As of 2025, it was the first event of its scale to go fully reusable, with over 91 percent of waste from all of its 32 vendors diverted from landfills.

Celebrate what matters most at Tapu Te Ranga Island Bay Festival!



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**New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts**

**Artist Showcase**  
Lynn Blann and Helen Keen  
6 December 2025 – 25 March 2026  
Where: DoubleTree by Hilton Wellington  
10am–5pm  
Wellington-based Lynn Blann and Auckland-based Helen Keen are the new artists participating in the collaboration between DoubleTree by Hilton Wellington and the Academy to present original artworks by contemporary New Zealand artists to visitors to the hotel at 28 Grey St, Wellington.

**Art To Go Exhibition**  
10 January 2026 – 8 February 2026  
Where: Wellington Cathedral, 2 Hill Street, Thorndon, Wellington  
10am–4pm  
Popular small works cash and carry exhibition

**Contemporary New Zealand art**



## 40 years strong



Deacon Blue, the iconic Scottish pop rock band known for enduring hits like *I'll Never Fall in Love Again*, *Dignity*, *Real Gone Kid*, and *Fergus Sings the Blues*, are buoyed by a renewed sense of adventure in the shape of a new album and national tour coming to The Opera House on Valentine's Day.

*The Very Best of Deacon Blue Live* marks not only the 40th anniversary of their formation in Glasgow in the mid-80s, followed shortly by the release of their soulful and groundbreaking debut album *Raintown* (1987), but their first return to our shores in three years. The tour will feature a specially curated setlist of the songs you know and love, blending massive anthems with intimate surprises and new tracks from *The Great Western Road*, their 11th studio album that came out in March last year.

Featuring the lead single *Late '88*, described by *The Guardian* as a “sweet slice of disco-infused pop”, the record debuted at number one on the Scottish Albums Chart, number three on the UK Albums Chart, and number two on the UK Independent Albums Chart. *Renowned For Sound* wrote that *The Great Western Road* acts as “a masterclass in classy instrumentation and great songwriting”, while *The Guardian* called the veteran Scottish hitmakers “still an arena-filling prospect long after their late-80s heyday” when they brought *The Very Best of Deacon Blue Live* to Brighton Centre a handful of months ago.

Like a fine wine, Deacon Blue are “more poignant and potent than ever”.

## A record of reinvention



Freaks, unite! “We are packing up our synthesizers, glowsticks, and broken guitars and heading to Australia and New Zealand”, A Place to Bury Strangers declare. Wednesday the 11<sup>th</sup> of February is the day you'll need to brace for when the American rock band detonates their explosive new album *Synthesizer* at Meow.

*Synthesizer* is so named for a physical entity: a synthesizer made specifically for the band's seventh album. After all, to reinvent one's sound, one must also build a new instrument. The writing began in 2022, A Place to Bury Strangers then reformed with a new lineup. Frontman Oliver Ackermann remained at the helm, now joined by friends John and Sandra Fedowitz.

“It felt like a fresh new thing,” Ackermann says. “I wanted to write songs everyone was excited about playing.”

That sense of reimagination and connectivity crackles through the record.

“It's pretty messed up, chaotic,” Ackermann describes, “but it feels really human.”

*Synthesizer* is romantic, colourful, loud as hell. Deliberately DIY, it is a record that celebrates sounds that are spontaneous and natural, the kind of music that can only come from collaboration and community. In practice, it is a study on walls of noise and sound that explores what it means to twist and bend gear to its limits, to search for what Ackermann jokingly (and not jokingly) calls the “most epic sound journey”.

You're invited to join A Place to Bury Strangers on that journey in what will be a raw and raucous night of revelry.

## Reliably beautiful



“A kind of musical morphine”, Gregory Alan Isakov's songs are “relentlessly majestic”, *Associated Press* writes, while *Paste* calls his sixth and most recent studio album *Appaloosa Bones* “reliably beautiful and starkly self-possessed throughout”.

The GRAMMY®-nominated singer, songwriter, and musician will return to our shores this February to perform an intimate solo acoustic show spanning his catalogue – one that's garnered over one billion streams to date – at The Opera House on Thursday the 12<sup>th</sup>. This will be a chance for fans to free-fall into his indie-rock and folk world with stripped-back arrangements of songs from all six records: *That Sea*, *The Gambler*; *This Empty Northern Hemisphere*; *The Weatherman*; *Gregory Alan Isakov with the Colorado Symphony*; *Evening Machines*, for which he received the GRAMMY nomination for Best Folk Album; and, of course, *Appaloosa Bones*, in which he “turns a short poem into a magnificent piece of music that can captivate for hours”, time and again, *No Depression* declares.

Isakov was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, raised in Philadelphia, and now calls Boulder, Colorado home. He tours internationally with his band and has performed with several national symphony orchestras across the United States. When he's not on the road, the passionate horticulturalist runs Starling Farm in Boulder County, which provides produce to CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) members, restaurants, and the local food bank Community Food Share.

In concert, Isakov will be joined by the delicate harmonies of Canadian duo Ocie Elliott, making for an evocative evening of sublime storytelling.

## Dance and defy



Pōneke theatrical anthems meet Ōtautahi heartfelt pop rock when Skram and Castaway play San Fran on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January with support from local ledge and singer-songwriter Jade Merematira.

Both electro pop outfit Skram and Castaway have a new release to celebrate.

Skram – Henry Ashby (vocals, guitar, keys) and Felix Nesbitt (drums, vocals) with Dylan Jennings on keys, synth, and organ – have just released their epic sophomore album *What Is A Man*, a dynamic and daring dive into life, death, gender, and identity. Exploring what it means to be alive in a world that constantly asks us to be something else, this genre-defying odyssey sparkles as a vulnerable yet danceable act of defiance.

Castaway is a five-piece of best mates Jack Hassell (sax, keys, synth, backing vocals, MC, hype man), Jackson Stewart (lead vocals, guitar, piano, drums), Joe Martin (lead vocals, drums, guitar), Rhys Blaas (guitar, backing vocals, drums), and Austen Rangi (bass, backing vocals). They recently dropped their sophomore EP *Nondual*.

“Each of these tracks represents a part of this idea of nonduality – the connection of all things. It's our way of unpacking this pretty big concept and trying to figure out what it means for us and for the world. We can't wait to invite you all to do the same”, Castaway wrote ahead of the EP release on October the 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

Castaway your prior plans and Skram to San Fran for a double bill of incredible Aotearoa music.

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## Step into Summer's most immersive adventure – but book ahead for the full experience!

Wellington and the wider region are in for a sensory treat this summer with the arrival of *Breathe | Mauri Ora: An Immersive Journey into Nature* by Marshmallow Laser Feast, a spectacular new exhibition at Te Papa.

Whether you're looking for a unique whānau activity, an inspiring weekend outing, or something a little different, *Breathe | Mauri Ora* is an ideal pick.

The immersive exhibition features awe-inspiring video installations on a grand scale, where towering trees, flowing tides, and cosmic wonders unfold before your eyes. Children will marvel at the vibrant visuals and sounds, while adults take in the deeper themes of connection and wellbeing.

Through guided meditation, large-scale video works, and interactive experiences, visitors evolve from droplets of water to plants, cells, and stars, becoming part of the cycle of life and the cosmos.

Created by internationally acclaimed art collective Marshmallow Laser Feast, the exhibition is open daily and fully indoors, making it perfect for both blue-sky days and blustery Wellington afternoons. Its blend of science, art, and storytelling offers something for everyone – nature lovers, tech enthusiasts, creatives, and curious minds.

Alongside the exhibition is an add-on, optional 25-minute virtual reality experience that enhances the visit through complete audio and visual immersion, taking you on an extraordinary journey through the breath itself. This unique experience costs an additional \$10, and a special VR package ticket includes fast-track entry to the exhibition.

With limited VR headsets available for each session, demand has been sky-high. Anyone hoping to catch the full experience is urged to book their session in advance to avoid missing out.

A packed events season designed for all ages helps to unpack the themes of *Breathe | Mauri Ora*. See the world from a new perspective and discover experiences celebrating our connection to te taiao (nature):

### **Panel Talk: Interconnected | Fri 20 Feb, 6-9pm**

Discover how art, science, nature, and Indigenous knowledge converge as Marshmallow Laser Feast and experts kōrero.

### **From Land, Sea, and Sky | Wed 25 Feb and 11 Mar, 6.30-8pm**

An evening of spotlight talks from Mana Whenua kaitiaki and Te Papa natural history and art curators.

### **The Art of Wellbeing symposium | Sun 22 Feb, 9am to 3pm**

Breathe balance into your busy life with this wellbeing symposium hosted by broadcaster, author, and te reo Māori advocate Stacey Morrison.

### **The Path: A Performance Journey | Sat 7 Mar, 7-10pm**

Poets, musicians, and dancers respond to the immersive worlds of *Breathe | Mauri Ora*.

With its interactive and sensory elements, stunning visuals, and soundscapes that transport you to another world, this is an experience that you and your family will talk about long after you leave the gallery.

***Breathe | Mauri Ora: An Immersive Journey into Nature* by Marshmallow Laser Feast is at Te Papa from 13 December 2025 to 27 April 2026.**

Book your tickets now to avoid missing out, or surprise someone with a gift card for this unique experience: [tepapa.nz/Breathe](https://tepapa.nz/Breathe)

*Breathe | Mauri Ora: An Immersive Journey into Nature* by Marshmallow Laser Feast, 2025. Photos by Maarten Holl. Te Papa.





## Living legends



Earlier this month, Aotearoa roots reggae icons Katchafire released a new album, *Revival 2.0 Remixed and Remastered*, which sees their 2003 platinum debut remixed by Logan Bell, Stephen Maxwell, and Phillip McFarlane. *Revival 2.0 Guest Edition* will feature collaborations with some of the incredible artists the beloved band has met on their journey to becoming a worldwide phenomenon.

“Katchafire has performed at the world’s biggest reggae festivals and has had the privilege of supporting and befriending the world’s biggest reggae artists, some of whom are our musical heroes. We are fortunate to bridge the gap between our humble country of Aotearoa and the world”, Katchafire singer and founding member Bell says. “We feel blessed to be able to collaborate with some of these living legends. We are excited to release the first single – *Seriously* featuring guest singer Ali Campbell of UB40. We hope you enjoy it as much as we have enjoyed the process of creating *Revival 2.0 Guest Edition*.”

Both acts will perform live at Kingston Calling, an epic nationwide reggae festival that will put its roots down in Pōneke at Waitangi Park on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February, just six days after *Seriously* comes out. Headlining the festival is UB40 featuring the original voice of Ali Campbell, the heart of global hits like *Red Red Wine* and *Kingston Town*. UB40 are returning to New Zealand for their first major tour down under in seven years and will be joined by an all-star lineup of The Black Seeds, Corrella, and, of course, Katchafire.

## Art at all costs



The popular annual New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts (NZAFA) small-works cash and carry members’ art fair returns in 2026. Settling in at Wellington Cathedral until the 8<sup>th</sup> of February, the exhibition faced unexpected challenges throughout its first few weeks.

“January has traditionally been a quiet month within the Cathedral’s calendar; a time for maintenance to be done and staff to take holidays,” NZAFA director Wayne Newman says. “Setting up the *Art To Go* exhibition around the contemplation labyrinth inside the entrance to the Cathedral was expected to be a straightforward exercise.”

“The magnificent funeral for Dame Karen Poutasi, however, required every metre of the nave and saw *Art To Go* set up temporarily in Loaves & Fishes instead, only for the orchestra and performers of an Azamara Cruises concert at the Cathedral on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January to require that space as a break-out room.”

As of the 16<sup>th</sup> of January, *Art To Go* will be held in the nave with visitors able to buy and take away any works they love straight away. “Given the range of styles and media, there should be something here within everyone’s budget,” Newman adds.

Established in 1882, the NZAFA is one of the longest-serving arts institutions in the country. Though no longer located in a permanent building, the non-profit hosts exhibitions in venues across the capital in an effort to continue promoting the arts and making them accessible to a wide range of creatives and audiences.



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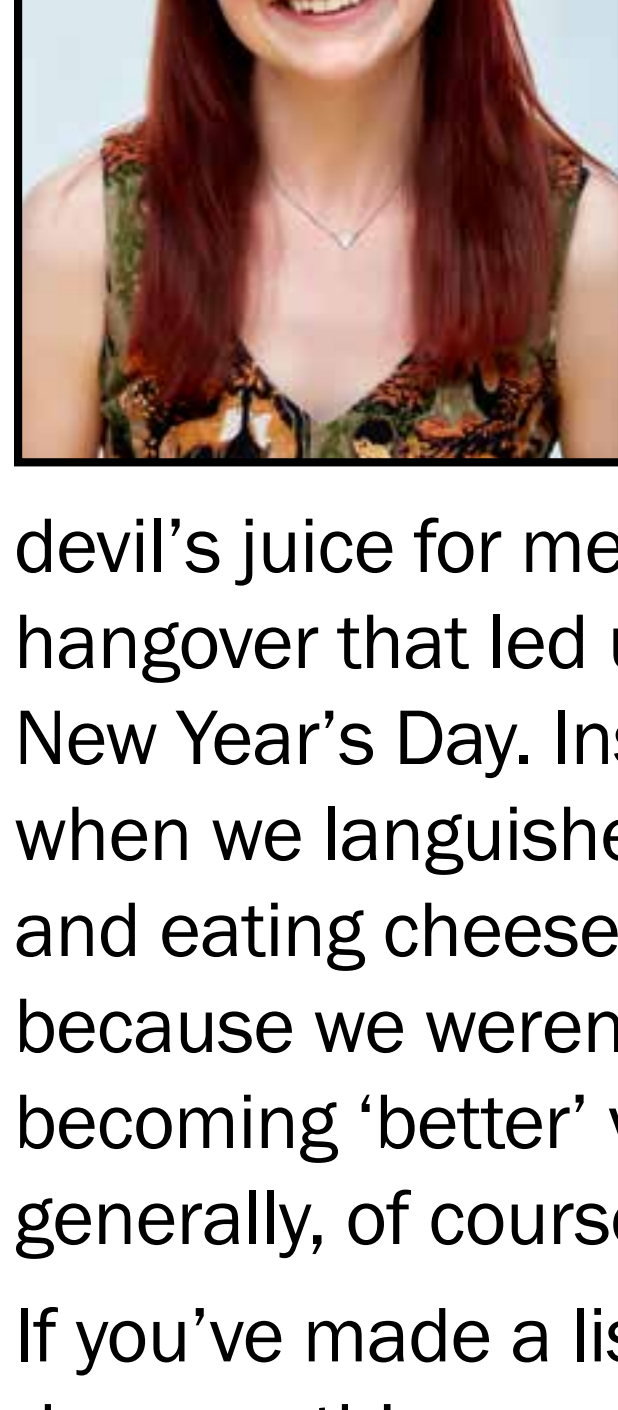


# News

## A word from Maddi...

### Reframe as a gain

by **Madelaine Empson**



By now, if we've not abandoned them altogether, many of us will be glaring angrily at our New Year's resolutions. Long gone are the endorphins from our 5k run (okay, moderate walk) on the 1<sup>st</sup> (okay, 2<sup>nd</sup>) of January. The smug sense of satisfaction we felt when we declared "No

devil's juice for me, thanks" has faded, as has the hangover that led us to make the announcement on New Year's Day. Instead, we dream of a bygone time when we languished in the sun, drinking prosecco and eating cheese, unbothered and unsweaty because we weren't puffing up hills, hellbent on becoming 'better' versions of ourselves. Speaking generally, of course.

If you've made a list that requires axing or cutting down on things you enjoy, you might now be feeling a sense of sacrifice – even loss. I have been in that camp many times, but weirdly, I can count a few occasions when I've not struggled at all. Instead, I've found the process of 'quitting' something easy – even joyful.

For example, I tried to stop smoking a grand total of four times – two sucked, two rocked, one stuck. I was a chain-smoker for seven years and have been happily smokefree for seven as well. The attempt that worked was because of a mindset shift. You'll notice I put the word quitting in inverted commas above. That's because the language alone suggests you're giving something up. Why not think about what you're gaining instead? Health! Money! Non-stinkiness! Studies show that 80 percent of people fail their New Year's resolutions (at least the studies that support this column). But framing a goal as something positive means you'll be excited about it and way more likely to succeed.

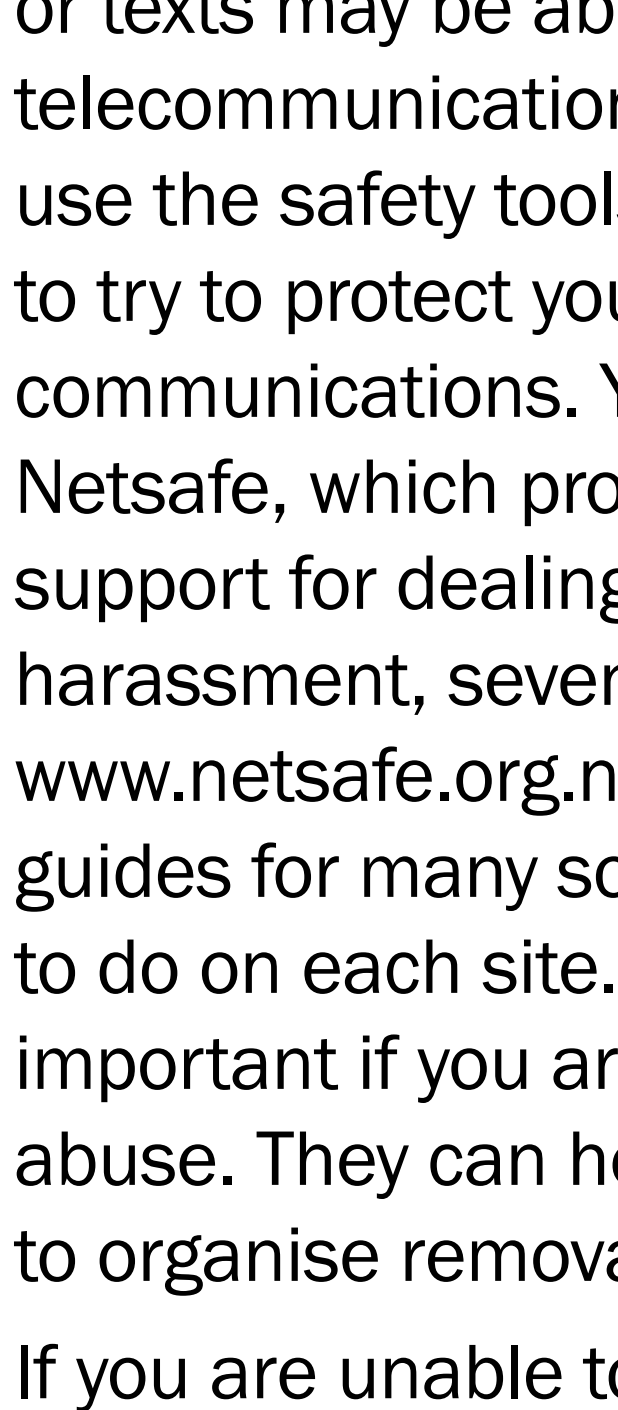
The second thing that I think is worth looking at is *why* you want to do the thing. Do you want to run a marathon because you want to challenge yourself and accomplish something massive, gaining fitness and friendships and confidence along the way? Or do you want to do it because 'skinny culture' is back on social media? Huge boo! (I'm booing social media, not you.) One scenario gives you so many more great things to take away than the other.

So, here's all my whoops, hollers, and cheers: hope you achieve all your goals and have a Happy New Year!

## Advice from Alan

### Dealing with cyber abuse

by **Alan Knowsley, consultant, Rainey Collins Lawyers**



Abuse and harassment online can take many forms such as bullying, posting objectionable material, identity theft, and threats of harm. Dealing with the abuser and getting the material removed can often be difficult.

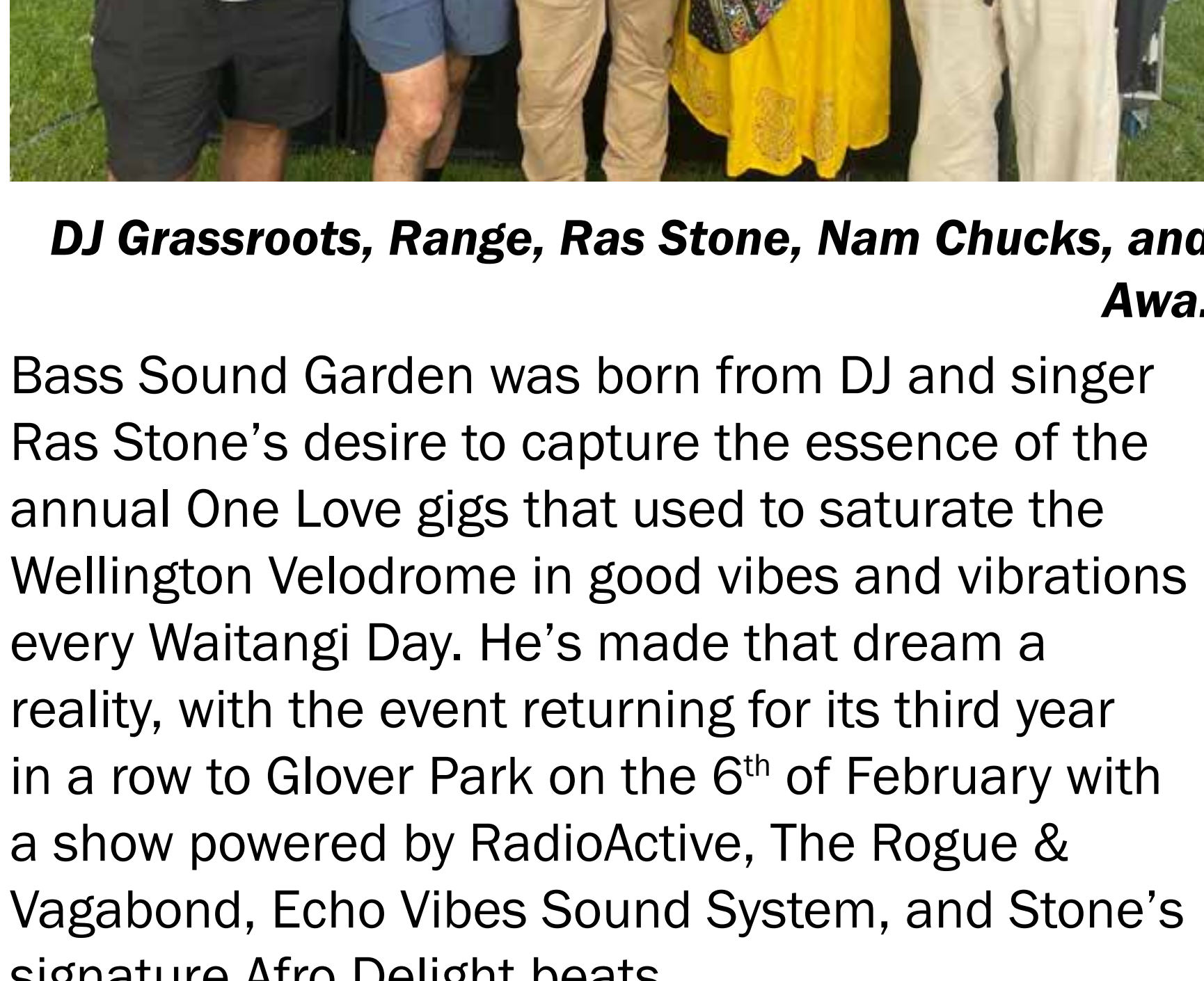
Repeated abusive calls or texts may be able to be dealt with by your telecommunications provider. You can also use the safety tools on social media platforms to try to protect yourself and to report harmful communications. You should report abuse to Netsafe, which provides free and confidential support for dealing with online abuse and harassment, seven days a week. Their website is [www.netsafe.org.nz](http://www.netsafe.org.nz) and they also provide online guides for many social media platforms on what to do on each site. Advice from Netsafe is really important if you are suffering online harassment or abuse. They can help contact the platforms and try to organise removal of the material for you.

If you are unable to stop the abuse through Netsafe or your telecommunications provider, you can take action under the Harmful Digital Communications Act, which aims to deter and punish online abuse and harassment. This can include an application to the District Court for orders against the person posting the material to cease their harassment and to remove the offending material. It can also include orders for the social media platform to take down the material. Some platforms are helpful, while others make it difficult by requiring action to be taken in other countries where they are based rather than in New Zealand where they operate on the internet.

Identifying where material is posted is one thing. Identifying who posted it is often quite difficult. An order against one platform may just result in an abuser shifting to another platform or using AI to send out multiple abusive messages to many different places. If you cannot identify who has posted material, then orders against each social media platform may be your only remaining course of action and this can require a large investment of time and money.

## One love

by **Alessia Belsito-Riera**



**DJ Grassroots, Range, Ras Stone, Nam Chucks, and Awa.**

Bass Sound Garden was born from DJ and singer Ras Stone's desire to capture the essence of the annual One Love gigs that used to saturate the Wellington Velodrome in good vibes and vibrations every Waitangi Day. He's made that dream a reality, with the event returning for its third year in a row to Glover Park on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February with a show powered by RadioActive, The Rogue & Vagabond, Echo Vibes Sound System, and Stone's signature Afro Delight beats.

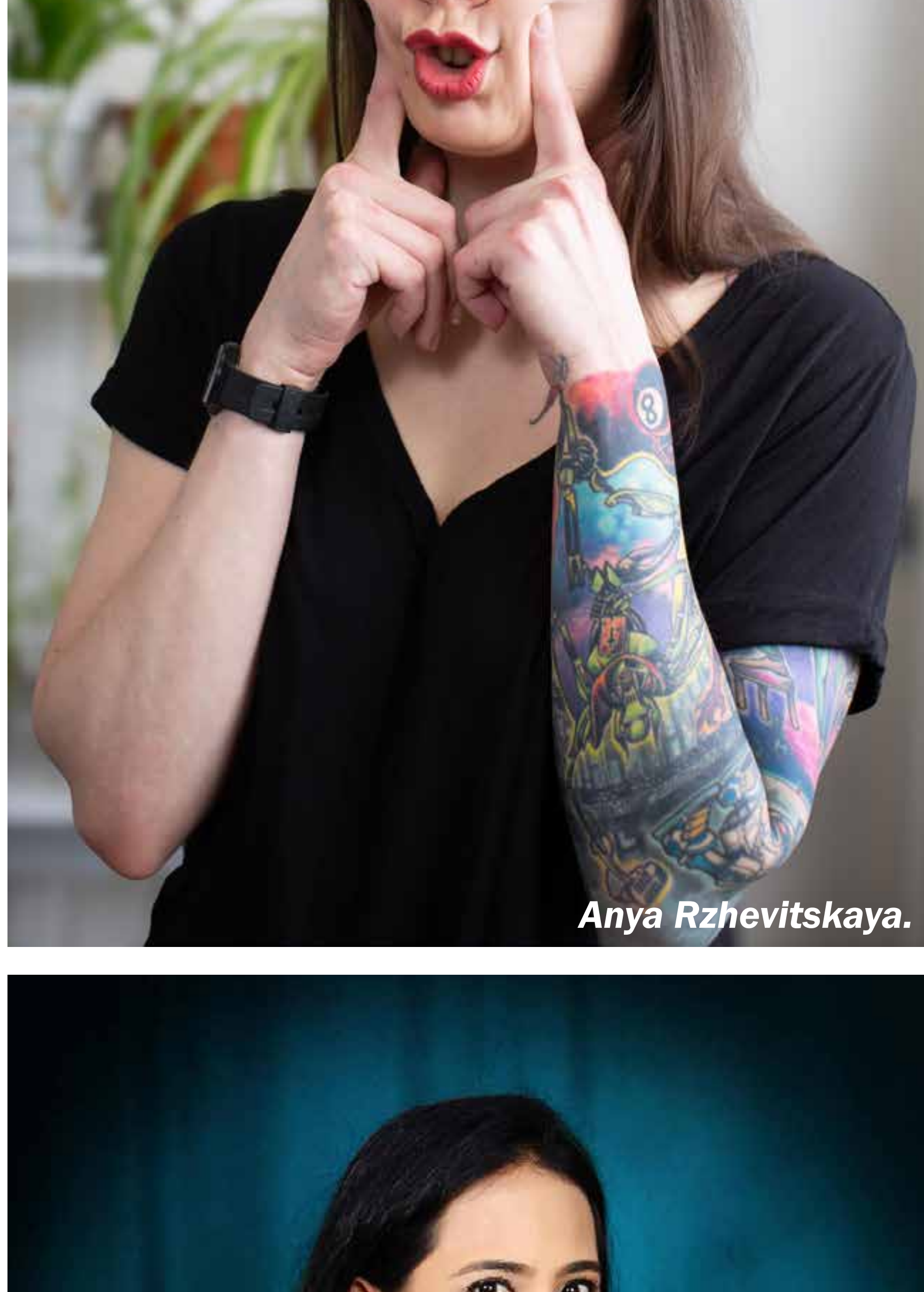
Coinciding with Waitangi Day is reggae icon Bob Marley's birthday, which together inspire Bass Sound Garden's kaupapa of connection, culture, and community. The family event is a safe place for people from all walks of life, with Marley's tunes, music of African origin, and bass beats pumping through the speakers throughout the day.

"The celebration and promotion of music of African origins and two important occurrences in history – Waitangi Day and Bob Marley's birthday – resonate with tones of freedom and justice," Stone says, adding that Marley's songs are more relevant today than ever before. "The message in his music resonates with the madness and injustice going on in the world at the moment".

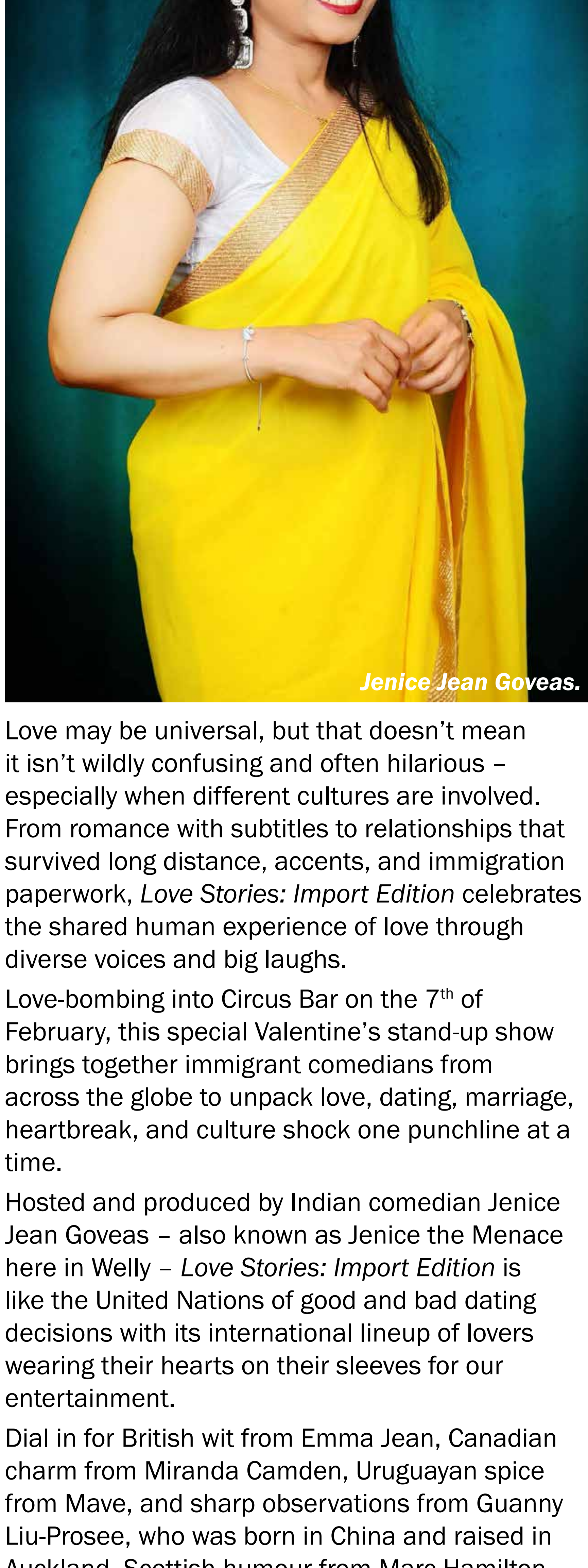
Starting at 1pm and bumping away until dusk, Stone hopes visitors have an unforgettable day.

"To quote one of my favourite singers Micah Shemaiah: 'We all walk on the same roads, come from the same soul and that's just the way it goes. One love, same blood, just different skin tones! Celebration of life!'"

## Love with borders



**Anya Rzhevitskaya.**



**Jenice Jean Goveas.**

Love may be universal, but that doesn't mean it isn't wildly confusing and often hilarious – especially when different cultures are involved. From romance with subtitles to relationships that survived long distance, accents, and immigration paperwork, *Love Stories: Import Edition* celebrates the shared human experience of love through diverse voices and big laughs.

Love-bombing into Circus Bar on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February, this special Valentine's stand-up show brings together immigrant comedians from across the globe to unpack love, dating, marriage, heartbreak, and culture shock one punchline at a time.

Hosted and produced by Indian comedian Jenice Jean Goveas – also known as Jenice the Menace here in Welly – *Love Stories: Import Edition* is like the United Nations of good and bad dating decisions with its international lineup of lovers wearing their hearts on their sleeves for our entertainment.

Dial in for British wit from Emma Jean, Canadian charm from Miranda Camden, Uruguayan spice from Mave, and sharp observations from Guanny Liu-Prosee, who was born in China and raised in Auckland. Scottish humour from Marc Hamilton, Russian perspectives from Anya Rzhevitskaya, and Chinese comedy from Chen Wang, plus jokes from American-born naturalised Kiwi Chris Payton prove that citizenship may change but comedy doesn't.

Whether you're single, coupled, situationship-adjacent, or keen to judge other people's choices, *Love Stories: Import Edition* is a show that promises big laughs and the comforting reminder that love is hard no matter where you're from.



# Close-up

by Alessia Belsito-Riera

## A Few More Slices of Heaven



**Self-portrait by Daniel Vernon.**

Whether you've seen him tearing up stages across Aotearoa with his band DARTZ or you get his YeeHawTheBoys comics delivered straight to your inbox every week, Daniel Vernon (Ngāti Kahungunu ki Te Wairoa) is a creative force with his fingers in many artistic pies.

You may think music and cartoons aren't in the same realm, but where the award-winning post-pub-rock band and doodles intersect is in the convergence of humour and political satire. Vernon's work is woven together by his distinctly Kiwi comedic voice and a deep love for the communities that inspire it, as can be seen in the new DARTZ album *3 hangi pit* and his new book *A Few More Slices of Heaven*. His style takes affectionate digs at New Zealand quirks and culture while still serving as a love letter to the country he calls home.

As for *A Few More Slices of Heaven*, Vernon says that "this collection is really about celebrating the stories we tell each other as New Zealanders – those little cultural touchstones that make us laugh because they're so deeply familiar. If you've ever argued about the correct way to eat a mince pie or discovered life's meaning while stuck in traffic on State Highway 1, this one's for you."

On the day of the book's release, Vernon and I dove into his creative inspirations, the everyday absurdities we all know and love, and the things that define the Aotearoa experience.

### **As an artist and a musician, creativity seems like an important facet of your life.**

It feels like a means of communication. I was a visual learner, and it's always been the way I preferred to communicate. Sometimes it's hard to talk about things, so it's easier to show and tell.

### **Do music and visual art scratch different itches for you?**

Music is more of a collaborative effort. I'm working with my three best friends and there's a lot more editing between the three of us; more cooks in the kitchen in a good way. That scratches the itch of wanting to work with people and collaborate. The comics and art are only me, which I like because it's focusing on honing that one craft. Being able to have a balance to work on things myself and then launch into something that's more collaborative scratches both those itches.

### **How would you describe your art style?**

In terms of content, I would say it's satirical and a bit odd and weird leaning. But visually, it's based in the cartoons that I grew up with, like Cartoon Network-y. Everyone keeps telling me that the eyes look insane, which I like leaning into, especially when you're going for more political stuff. It's easier to disarm people when they look a bit off-putting.

### **What draws you to humour and satire in your art and in your music?**

It's a great form of communication, especially in times like these where things can seem very overwhelming and hard to digest. Things are purposefully made that way sometimes so people can't learn or process. Humour is a great way to break it down to the bones and make the evil seem cartoonishly evil. It gets straight to the ridiculousness of it. Comics and music are a great way of communicating to people without talking down to them, which I really like.

### **What draws you to the political side of art?**

It was kind of an accident, to be honest! It just ended up feeling like what I was really good at. But it's being able to communicate or highlight what's happening to people who may not have a direct interest or feel like they can't access those topics. I grew up in small town New Zealand, and I think people can get disinterested or disengaged from politics and stuff like that. This is a creative way to get people engaged and learning without them being made to feel like they aren't smart enough.

### **Tell me about your new book *A Few More Slices of Heaven*!**

It's kind of the opposite. I spend most of my days making political stuff, which can at times be very depressing or make you feel angry and disheartened with the world and the country. I wanted to do something that is the opposite and celebrates what I love about New Zealand. I did a book last year called *Slices of Heaven*, so this is the direct sequel to that. It made me feel reinvigorated with drawing and creating. It was therapeutic for me, in part. I like the reaction that people have when I share those specific stories – less anger and more people being together and remembering [shared experiences]. It's about reminding people what can be celebrated about New Zealand.

### **What is Kiwi culture to you?**

It's a lot of community stuff, so people coming together. We are very creative in terms of both arts and music and also just ingenuity when it comes to how we engage with education and how we do things. Then there are some things that are institutions that are really weird and unique to New Zealand. Like the lolly scramble, for example, just doesn't happen in any other country – it's really insane! But funny New Zealand-specific things that are more collective than individual.

### **How do you capture that in your art?**

With the book, it's about putting it into genres to highlight the cute things about New Zealand. So, the lolly scramble is done in a horror, *Hunger Games* theme with kids trying to fight each other off to get lollies. And finding ways that they can do that with Nerf guns and things that you might have grown up with as a kid. Then there's a detective-noir story about banned items at school, and there's Harold the Giraffe being in our lives as adults running a spin class or an intervention. Finding out how those things can fit in with in a different genre, which is fun to experiment with in writing and drawing as well.

### **How is the process different in creating a book versus one-off comics?**

There is a lot more thought, because I try to structure them more as stories than just as one-panelled, to-the-point things. It's a bit more fun in terms of scripting and researching, which involves talking with people and comparing experiences. It's slightly more collaborative, but also, it's a little bit more thought-out and pre-planned. I get to enjoy the art side a lot more because there are less time constraints.

### **What's next for you, both with DARTZ and solo?**

With DARTZ, currently, as we speak, we're in the studio writing a new album, so that's my focus for the next month. Then I'll probably take a month off after intensely doing this book for the last three months and then heading straight into the album. So I'm going to enjoy summer! Then, I've got a few more book ideas and a few other comics that I want to get back into soon. Obviously, the Substack still needs to be fed. So, just keep on going, keep on trucking.

Got a small New Zealand tour to take these new songs out on the road for our own sake and to do a little summer roady. There'll be one here at Valhalla [on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January], so that should be fun!

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# Waitangi celebrations

## What a weekend



Waitangi weekend in Porirua is shaping up to be a cracker, with a feast of rugby action joining the Waitangi Day smorgasbord.

National day celebrations on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February are perfect for the whole whānau, with activities planned for all ages at Te Rauparaha Park and Arena, Pātaka Art + Museum, and Te Awarua o Porirua Harbour.

Sons of Zion take to the mainstage alongside Benjamin Makisi, Aotea College kapa haka, Lisa Tomlins, Te Kura Māori o Porirua, and more homegrown talent. The ever-popular waka tours hosted by TOA Waka Ama return to the harbour and a huge selection of market stalls and zero-waste kai carts will take part too. Plus, enjoy art, history, and tamariki activities at Pātaka.

“The range of what’s going on is outstanding and I love seeing all the families out enjoying what’s on offer,” Porirua Mayor Anita Baker says. “It’s what the day is about.”

As for the rugby calendar, folks can get frenzied for the final pre-season match between the Hurricanes and Chiefs on the 7<sup>th</sup> at Porirua Park before Super Rugby Pacific kicks off. Canes fans can also attend a training session on the 5<sup>th</sup> and a captain’s run on Waitangi Day.

“We know the fans will be there in full force,” Hurricanes midfielder and Porirua local Riley Higgins says. “We can’t wait to see everyone there and mix and mingle after the game.”

Plan your weekend at [www.porirua.govt.nz](http://www.porirua.govt.nz)

## Celebrating our cultures



*Photo by Mark Tantrum Photography.*

Wellington City Council presents two special events in February to round out their summer events programme.

Visit Te Rā o Waitangi, a free whānau-friendly event at Waitangi Park on Friday the 6<sup>th</sup> of February, 12 noon to 6pm, to commemorate the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Aotearoa’s national day. Enjoy a main-stage programme packed with local talent from both tangata whenua and tangata te tiriti performers. Enjoy live music, dance, cultural performances, a Kids’ Zone, stalls, a treaty education space, and kai. Also on Waitangi Day, take the opportunity to attend the Theatre Roadshow performance of *He Māori?* by Ihaka Martyn and Taki Rua Productions, which is touring three locations.

Experience the sights, sounds, and flavours of the Pacific at the Wellington Pasifika Festival on Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup> of February, 12 noon to 6pm, also in Waitangi Park. The festival celebrates our unique Pacific communities. There will be live Pacific performances, food, stalls, a Kids’ Zone, and radio stage activations. Experience the card game Lalaga, designed by Torisse Lauulu, which uses Pasifika wisdom (talanoa) to foster empathy and connection through sharing stories. This year’s theme is Arrival, a celebration of and a welcome to the Pasifika communities who have made New Zealand their home. Come to Chaffers Marina Beach at 11:30am for the opening ceremony, including the arrival of the Atafu Tokelau Vaka.

Visit [wcc.govt.nz/events](http://wcc.govt.nz/events) and search Waitangi or Pasifika for more details.

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 Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2026

**Labour Day**  
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Friday 6 February

**WELLINGTON PASIFIKA FESTIVAL**

Saturday 7 February



# Waitangi celebrations

## Celebrating 50 years of Whakatupuranga Rua Mano



50 years ago, our iwi, hapū, and whānau imagined a different future. One where te reo Māori would again be heard in our homes, where our tikanga, mātauranga, and whenua would flourish, and where our people would stand tall in every space. From that bold vision came Whakatupuranga Rua Mano – Generation 2000, a strategy created by Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga, Te Āti Awa ki Whakarongotai, and Ngāti Toa Rangatira to rebuild the cultural vibrancy and collective strength of our people.

This year, as Te Wānanga o Raukawa celebrates the 50th anniversary of that vision, we acknowledge the courage of those tūpuna-minded leaders whose legacy is now lived by thousands who have journeyed through the Wānanga, each carrying the kaupapa into their homes, workplaces, and communities.

At our recent graduation, we witnessed the fruits of that intergenerational dream. Graduates walked across the stage not only with qualifications, but with deeper connections to identity, iwi, reo, and tikanga. Many shared that their time at the Wānanga had been life-changing: that they had returned to themselves, found a renewed sense of purpose, or strengthened the foundations they will now pass to their tamariki and mokopuna. This is the true measure of success for Te Wānanga o Raukawa: not simply academic achievement, but the flourishing of people, families, and communities aligned with kaupapa Māori values.

Te Wānanga o Raukawa was established as a place where Māori knowledge systems sit at the heart of teaching and learning, where reo and tikanga are normalised, and where every programme, from entry-level certificates to master's degrees, upholds the kaupapa envisioned in 1975.

As part of our 50-year celebrations, we reflect on the many milestones achieved: the revival of te reo in thousands of households; the strengthening of marae, hapū, and iwi structures; the development of Māori professionals across diverse fields; and the influence our graduates bring into government, education, health, environmental restoration, business, and community leadership. Yet the heart of Whakatupuranga Rua Mano remains the same: to prepare our people for a strong, self-determining future.

Today, that vision is as relevant as ever. Many of our people are searching for ways to reconnect to their heritage, reclaim their reo, or strengthen their sense of identity. Others are looking for study pathways that honour who they are while preparing them to work confidently and effectively in a Te Tiriti-based society. Te Wānanga o Raukawa offers a unique space where all of these aspirations can be pursued together.

We warmly encourage you to explore what the Wānanga has to offer. If you are searching for a place to learn, to grow, to belong, visit [www.wananga.com](http://www.wananga.com) to learn more and join us in shaping the next chapter of Whakatupuranga Rua Mano.

Whāia te pae tawhiti. He pae tata whakamaua kia tina, kia tina!

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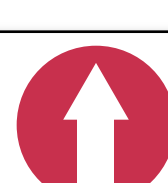
Choose from a range of interest areas including Education & Teaching, Health & Wellbeing, Environmental Management, Creative & Performing Arts, Māori Business, Law & Management, Te Reo Māori and Culture & Industry all embedded with Mātauranga Māori.

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Mountain Bike Station offers itinerary planning and booking for your ride on the Mountains to Sea Cycle Trail. Send us through your details, with the trip you would like to book and we will do all of the planning for you. Ride from the ski fields on Mount Ruapehu, stay in boutique accommodation along the trail, experience forests, rivers, jet boat, canoe, river boats and meet locals along your ride. Throughout your ride, we are there to support you, transporting your luggage and offering briefings for each section of your ride.





# North Island travel

## Experience incredible



Aotearoa is the land of adventure, and Ruapehu and Whanganui are at its heart. From the towering, snow-capped mountains that reach toward the heavens to the coursing rivers that cut deep veins through the landscape, Ruapehu and Whanganui are pulsing with life.

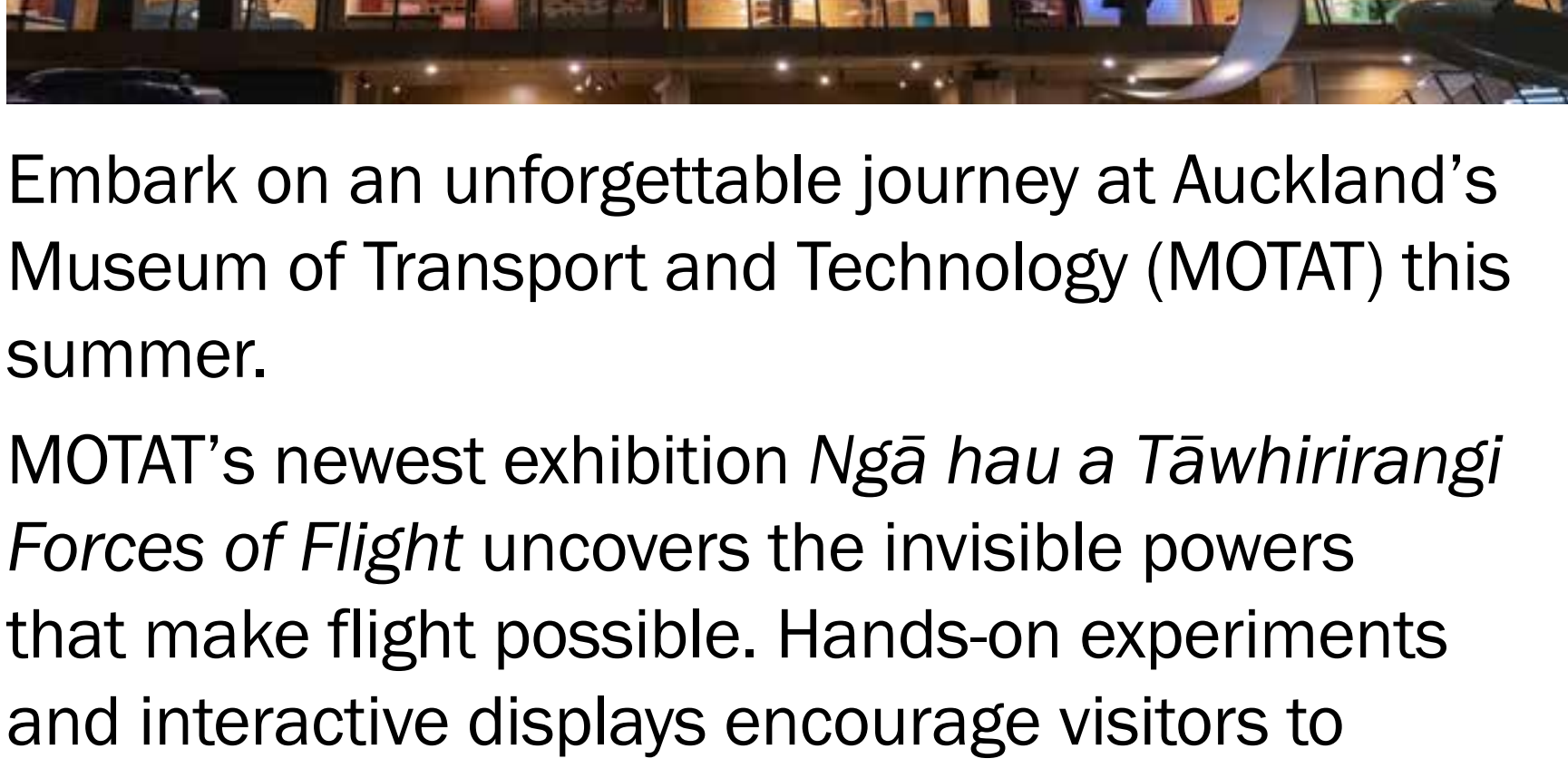
No one knows and loves this district and region more than Rebecca Mead and Ben Adam, two locals whose families have called this slice of paradise home for generations. As the co-owners of the Bridge to Nowhere Lodge and Tours and Ruapehu Adventure Hub, which encompasses Whanganui River Canoes, Mountain Bike Station, and Raetihi Holiday Park, they've made exploring the landscape a way of life.

Rebecca traces her pioneering soul back to her grandad William Mead – a bushman and surveyor who believed that the best way to understand Aotearoa was to experience it firsthand. He navigated every track and trail, paddled every river, and even established the first ski club on Mount Ruapehu. Today, William's spirit for adventure and pursuit of excellence is reflected in Rebecca's businesses.

As for Ben, he's been navigating the Whanganui Awa since day dot, so it will come as no surprise that he knows every twist and turn of its snaking path. His family founded the Bridge to Nowhere Lodge and Tours, which he and Rebecca purchased from his father just last year.

Through Bridge to Nowhere and Ruapehu Adventure Hub, Rebecca and Ben carry on their family legacy to give visitors the memories of a lifetime.

## Sky-high summer



Embark on an unforgettable journey at Auckland's Museum of Transport and Technology (MOTAT) this summer.

MOTAT's newest exhibition *Ngā hau a Tāwhirirangi Forces of Flight* uncovers the invisible powers that make flight possible. Hands-on experiments and interactive displays encourage visitors to explore how lift, thrust, drag, and weight work together to keep objects and creatures in the sky. *Forces of Flight* invites you to explore how science and imagination come together. Whether you're fascinated by the mechanics of flight or just love the magic of take-off, there's something here to lift your curiosity. The exhibition collection includes MOTAT's rainbow-coloured Lancer II hang glider spanning 9.75 metres, a Martin Jet Pack, and a human-sized manu aute kite by contemporary Māori artist Nikau Hindin.

There's plenty to enjoy after hours at MOTAT too. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of February, brace yourself for a night of big laughs with MOTAT's Mile High Comedy Club, featuring a stellar selection of Kiwi comedians including Janaye Henry, Matt Coombe, Maria Williams, and James Mustapic. The MOTAT curated show is part of the Auckland Pride Festival and will take off in the Aviation Hall, with Hugo Grrrl and international woman of mystery Medulla Oblongata bringing their camp charm as emcees with games of all kinds. DJ THROCAT will dish out pride anthems throughout the night and bespoke cocktails will be available at the bar.


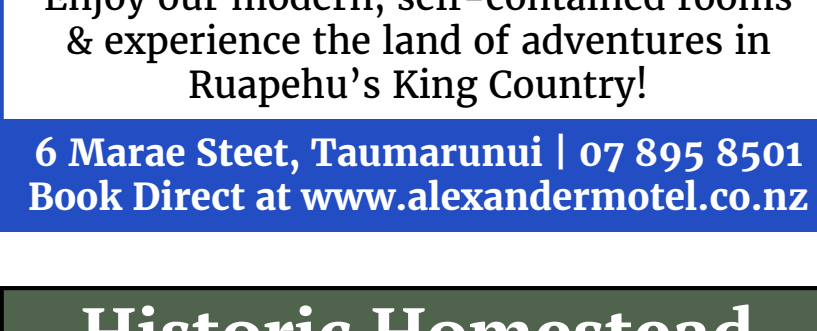
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# Celebrating pride

## Pride, health, and the science of zero risk



As our local LGBTQIA+ communities come together to celebrate diversity and resilience this Pride season, the team at Body Positive wants to share a quick reminder: looking after your sexual health is one of the best ways to look after yourself and your community.

Regardless of your gender or who you're dating, getting tested is the first step to staying in control. It's always better to know your status sooner rather than later so you can make the best choices for your body. If a result comes back positive, remember that healthcare has come a long way. Modern HIV treatment is simple, effective, and allows people to live long, healthy, vibrant lives.

There is one piece of science that everyone in our community should know: undetectable equals untransmittable, or U=U. When someone living with HIV is on effective treatment and their viral load becomes undetectable, there is zero risk of sexual transmission. It's not just low risk – it is zero. This breakthrough has completely changed what it means to live and love with HIV, stripping away the stigma of the past and replacing it with scientific certainty.

For those who test negative, we have more tools than ever to stay that way. PrEP (a daily pill) offers 99-percent protection against HIV, and PEP is available as an emergency option if you think you've been exposed within the last 72 hours. These options are available for everyone, no matter how you identify.

The Rainbow community is at its best when healthy, informed, and looking out for one another. By embracing the science of today and leaving the stigma of the past behind, we are building a brighter, more liberated future for all of us.

**MY BOYFRIEND IS  
LIVING WITH HIV  
I'M NOT BECAUSE HE  
CAN'T PASS IT ON**

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HEALTHY  
AND I LIVE  
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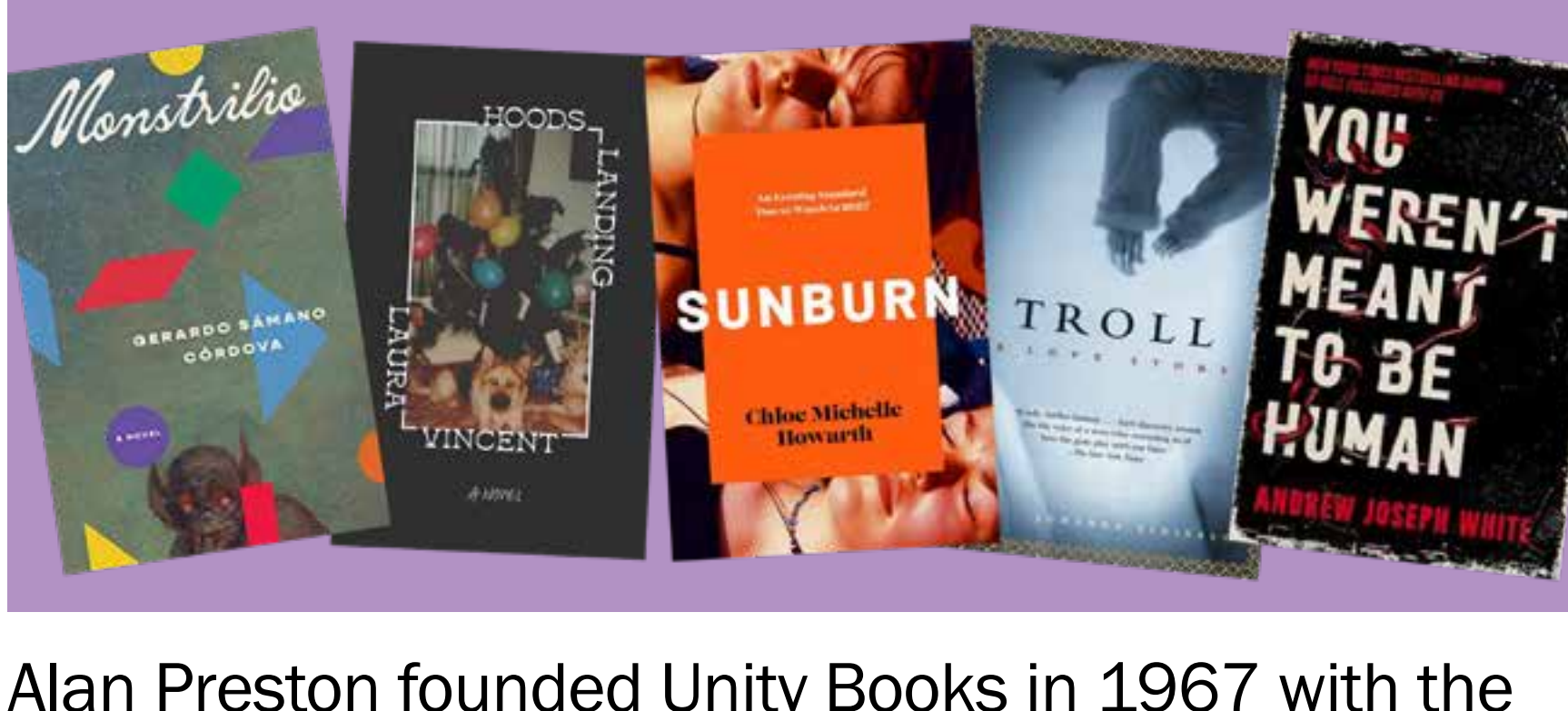
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# Celebrating pride

## Unabridged



Alan Preston founded Unity Books in 1967 with the vision of establishing a bookshop that would ferment ideas, provoke discussion, and thrill readers from all walks of life. The shop moved premises several times but has stayed on Willis Street where we're still going strong. For reasons of consumer attention in newspaper ads that's the abridged history.

For unabridged stories of identity from the raw and revolutionary to the beautifully ordinary, peruse Unity Books' shelves. Whether it's the raw honesty of Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*, the revolutionary joy of James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room*, or contemporary voices like Ocean Vuong and Carmen Maria Machado, we stock books we're proud to sell.

Take a peek at Pride Week staff picks too. *Sunburn* by Chloe Michelle Howarth looks at the experience of adolescent girlhood, teenage yearning, and intense female friendship in 1990s Ireland. *Hoods Landing* by Laura Vincent is a chaotic and discursive exploration of a rural Kiwi family and their secrets. Finnish cult novel *Troll* by Johanna Sinisalo is a weird, sensual, and intoxicating story about desire, wildness, and our natures that explores the boundaries that hold us in place. Original, heartrending, and surprising, *Monstrilio: A Novel* by Gerardo Sámamo Córdova is a surreal gripping story about how four intertwined characters deal with desire and otherness. *You Weren't Meant to Be Human* by Andrew Joseph White is a trans body horror that is violently disturbing but also clever, cathartic, and unexpectedly compassionate.



Pride Parade.



FRISKY Pride Wellington.

### 20<sup>th</sup> Feb. **SABRINA vs BILLIE: A Drag Fundraiser Smackdown:**

Ivy Bar & Cabaret, Cuba Street, Te Aro – 9:30pm. Calling pop girlyies, sad banger devotees, and fun and fierce lyrical loyalists for a drag smackdown fundraiser for InsideOUT.

### 7<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Pride Parade:**

Various locations in Te Aro – 5pm. Honouring past heroes while advocating for equity and inclusion for all, the parade embodies the spirit of the Rainbow community. Plus, catch live DJs and performers before, during, and after the parade.

### 7<sup>th</sup> Mar. **FRISKY Pride Wellington:**

Eva Pub, Dixon Street, Te Aro – 9pm. Dress head to toe in rainbow glam and dance the night away at the official Pride Parade afterparty.

### 14<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Pride Youth Ball:**

location TBD – 6pm. This vibrant celebration is all about letting your true colours shine in a safe and welcoming space filled with music, dancing, and pure joy.

### 15<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Out in the City:**

Odlins Plaza, Cable Street, Wellington Waterfront – 10am. Wellington Pride Festival has been running for 40 years! Celebrate with food, drink, live entertainment, market stalls, and more.

### 17<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Pride Hiko:**

Parliament, Molesworth Street, Te Aro – 12pm. Whether you're a member or an ally of the Rainbow community, march through the streets of Wellington with your pride flag held high.

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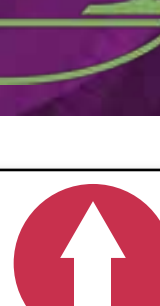
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# South Island travel

## Southern sojourn



Going south during the warmest months may seem counterintuitive, but a South Island summer is something out of a movie. With bright blue skies that stretch for miles, sweltering days that carry into the night, fresh produce around every corner, and endless lakes and rivers, forests and parks, track and trails, and mountains and beaches to choose from, a vacation to Te Waipounamu will deliver everything you crave.

The top is the greenest and most tropical, with some beautiful landscapes tucked away into azure bays – not to mention national parks galore. Queenstown takes the cake for Kiwi and international tourism, and thanks to its wealth of activities, stable weather, and jaw-dropping scenery, this comes as no surprise. Central Otago, Dunedin, and Southland have something for everyone, especially when it comes to nature, while Canterbury records some of the hottest days in the country. As for the West Coast, it's often wet but no less wonderful!

## Birds and braves



The Royal Albatross Centre on the Otago Peninsula gives visitors viewing access to the world's only mainland breeding colony of royal albatross, where the toroa find a sanctuary to raise their young. One of the biggest birds in the world, royal albatross are graceful giants with a wingspan exceeding three metres. Though they fly 19,000 kilometres per year and spend over 85 percent of their life at sea, the northern royal albatross is endemic to New Zealand.

At the centre, visitors can view the colony and learn all about them on guided tours. Their breeding season takes an entire year, so there is always something to see!

Hidden underneath is Fort Taiaroa. Tour through the tunnels to see the Armstrong Disappearing Gun and learn about the headland's human history. With artefacts, memorabilia, and scale recreations of fort life, a loop through Fort Taiaroa is both immersive and engaging.

## A right, not a privilege



Exploring the beautiful landscape of Central Otago is a bucket-list adventure best undertaken in summer by bike. Whether you're after bike rentals, accessories, a workshop space, or tours, Bike It Now! has got you covered.

The range of tours include short day trips, two-day adventures, three to five-day excursions, and six to 10-day experiences. Visitors can choose between the Otago Central Rail Trail, Roxburgh Gorge Trail, Clutha Gold Trail, Lake Dunstan Trail, or various combinations of them all. There are options for all ages and abilities.

With locations in Clyde, Cromwell, and Wanaka offering door-to-door pickups from Queenstown and drop-offs leaving Clyde each day, Bike It Now! makes organising your holiday stress free and seamless.

Whether you're keen to explore the mountains and lakes at your own pace, venture into the wilderness, or go big with a multi-day journey along New Zealand's Great Rides, Bike It Now! can craft your epic adventure.

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Roxburgh Gorge Trail, Photo by Will Nelson.

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Lake Dunstan Trail, Photo by Will Nelson.

Lake Dunstan Trail, Photo by Will Nelson.

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# Best in design

## Design your world



With 2026 seeing folks gravitating towards analogue, handmade goods, and more intentional purchasing, customised and tailored products are becoming more popular. Whether you're working on your property or trying to find your personal style, designers can provide perfect solutions.

There is no better way to feel at home than by surrounding yourself with pieces that you love and making the space work for you. From landscaping to interior design, styling to more practical solutions that make your property in tune with your lifestyle, there are plenty of local providers who can help you make a house your home.

Expressing yourself can be an everyday choice. Through clothes and accessories, hobbies and routines, you can design a life that reflects who you are. Nothing champions your personality like something designed especially for you – check out some of the local designers below who can help you design your world.

## Crafting memories



Jewellery is often something that is passed down through generations. Pieces like engagement rings, special occasion necklaces, or gem-studded brooches, are precious gifts that hold both value and memories. You can find heirloom pieces or get new ones custom made at Kapiti Jewellery Design and Manufacturers.

If you have something specific in mind, have a chat with one of the skilled jewellers. They can help you craft your piece from concept to completion, bringing your vision to life with every tiny detail. Even if you only have some key concepts in mind, they can turn your ideas into a beautiful design.

The team are passionate about remastering family heirloom pieces too. Whether broken or simply no longer in style, they can help repair and rework pieces so that you can wear them. Otherwise, if you have items you no longer want in your collection, Kapiti Jewellery Design also buys men's and women's jewellery.

## Function meets flair



As a boutique interior design studio, Appletree Designs is passionate about creating spaces that reflect their clients' styles. From new builds to restorations, renovations to add-ons, they design spaces that are current yet timeless and sophisticated.

A bespoke design company that provides a comprehensive service, Appletree Designs has partnered with The Gourmet Kitchen Company since 2015. Together, they craft Shaker kitchens and other custom-made cabinetry and joinery, plus vanities, internal doors, fixed furniture, built-in wardrobes, bars, and so much more. Timeless and elegant, this partnership enables Appletree to make any kitchen vision a reality while delivering a completely custom look unique to each client.

Another way the Appletree Design team bring dream interiors to life is through bespoke window treatments. The team can elevate a home's comfort, warmth, and style and completely transform a space.

Find out more at [www.appletreedesigns.co.nz](http://www.appletreedesigns.co.nz)

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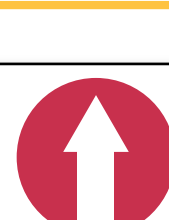
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# Starting up a business

## Every step of the way



RealFinance is real fast, real flexible, real friendly, and really Kiwi owned and operated. As a nationwide lender catering to both consumer and commercial markets, RealFinance helps New Zealanders find the best loan type to suit their specific situation and provides tailored repayment options to work within their budget.

Based in Wellington and with over 25 years of experience in the finance industry, managing director Rodney Varga is the driving force behind RealFinance. He runs a dedicated, passionate, and knowledgeable team who are committed to helping clients manage their wealth and achieve financial wellbeing. Customer service is a top priority for the RealFinance team – they understand there are real people behind the numbers, which is why they always recommend meeting face to face to discuss your personal circumstances before they start to direct you down a particular path.

From personal to business loans, vehicle finance to debt consolidation, mortgages to retirement planning, RealFinance is available to help you with any and all financial needs. In fact, Rodney and his team of experts can even help you with your KiwiSaver, discussing your options and looking into how it can contribute to whatever you may need it for.

With RealFinance, it can take less than 60 minutes to get approved for a loan. Get in touch today and they can guide you every step of the way.

## Take the next step



Referall helps businesses grow – sustainably, strategically, and at the pace that's right for them.

They start by getting to know your story: where your business has come from, where you want it to go, and what success looks like for you. From there, they apply proven experience from your industry to create marketing that connects with real people – turning attention into customers, and customers into loyal advocates.

Referall services are designed to support both steady and fast-growing businesses. We build the right mix of solutions to support your goals. This can include content and brand campaigns, social engagement, call centre and telemarketing support, loyalty programmes, and advocacy development – always tailored, never one-size-fits-all.

What sets Referall apart is their focus on what actually matters at your stage of growth. They don't add complexity for the sake of it. Instead, they create the right environment for revenue growth, supported by clear planning and realistic roadmaps that look beyond a single campaign.

Once your campaign is live, Referall closely track performance and refine activity to ensure your spend is working hard and delivering measurable results. They work alongside you to explain what's working, what's not, and where the next opportunities lie.

If you're ready to take the next step in your business growth, visit [www.referall.co.nz](http://www.referall.co.nz) and get in touch for a conversation about what's possible.


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# Starting up a business

## Welcoming workspace



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A proudly New Zealand-owned, Wellington-based company since it opened in 1990, Dobbins Office Furniture ships nationwide via their online store. They have an extensive collection of New Zealand-made and imported ergonomic furniture for all kinds of businesses, and if you can't find what you're looking for or have questions, the knowledgeable team can answer all your questions and help you design a space that works. They also offer custom furniture and office design services to suit your individual or business needs.

Tailoring your workspace with the most practical solutions will boost productivity and improve the functionality of your office. Find out more and browse the collection at [www.dobbins.co.nz](http://www.dobbins.co.nz)

## Craft your design



Whether you're just starting out or you're giving your business a rebrand, physical and digital marketing is one of the best ways to promote what you do and tell people where they can find you. TBD Digital offers the full suite of design services to help you build your brand.

Founded in 1991 by managing director extraordinaire John Serepisos, TBD Digital is located in the heart of Wellington's creative Cuba Precinct. From their headquarters, the team of specialists take a personalised and hands-on approach to every job, ensuring clients are happy when they leave and even happier to return.

From creating signage to helping clients identify you, printing branded stationery to promotional material, creating a logo to sorting out packaging, making digital templates to typesetting and publication design, building your website to tech support, photography to videography, TBD Digital can help you craft your business image exactly as you imagined it.

## Moulded to you



Innovation, quality, and ergonomics collide when it comes to Ergohuman, a state-of-the-art office chair company built for the body that launched in New Zealand in 2020.

In 2005, the brand was developed exclusively to design a chair that would provide superior support to the back for long periods of time, minimising the pain and health conditions that can be developed from hours sitting at a desk. Today, Ergohuman is revered across the globe as a stylish, supportive, and sustainable solution.

Sustainability is front of mind, with products being made from 21 recyclable materials and being 98 percent recyclable itself. Crafted from cast aluminium and polymeric composite materials, each chair is built to last and comes with a five-year warranty.

Check out the Ergohuman 2 Elite, made to keep you comfortable while supporting your posture and designed for durability, as well as other models online at [www.ergohuman.co.nz](http://www.ergohuman.co.nz)

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# North Island travel – Hawke's Bay



## Par2 Minigolf

Minigolf has been a staple of Napier's Marine Parade since the 1940s. What began simply as a large putting green has developed into Par2 Minigolf, guaranteed fun for you and the kids. Located adjacent to the local isite, you'll enjoy panoramic views of the coast of Hawke's Bay while you compete on one of two courses: Pacific Pro-Am or Deco Drive. The former is a quintessential minigolf course, full of wacky angles, tricky water hazards, and tree obstacles. Deco Drive is a complex course with organic curves and harsh slopes.



## MTG Hawke's Bay

There is always something new and exciting to discover at the MTG Hawke's Bay. This award-winning museum is made up of three distinct buildings – an art deco masterpiece, a modernist gem, and a light-filled gallery that looks out across the Pacific Ocean. The museum's collections tell historic stories of the region and beyond, including the 1931 earthquake that devastated the region and the legacy of art deco architecture that is still celebrated today. Their fabulous shop also sells a range of beautiful cards, gifts, books, and mementos.



## Faraday Museum of Technology

Ignite your imagination at the Faraday Museum of Technology, where hands-on adventures await visitors of all ages! Discover interactive exhibits where you can touch, play, and explore the wonders of science, technology, and history in exciting ways. From historic appliances and engines to energy sources and games, there's so much to see and uncover. A magical place where history comes to life anew, the Faraday Museum of Technology offers an experience you won't forget that's perfect for families and anyone with a curious mind!



*Photo by Molly Rose Nilsson.*

## The National Aquarium of NZ

The National Aquarium of New Zealand is home to saltwater, freshwater, and land animal exhibits from New Zealand and around the world. The 1.5-million-litre Oceanarium, which you can experience with a walk through an underwater viewing tunnel, showcases the variety of aquatic species that exist in Hawke's Bay, including stingrays, kingfish, hāpuku, snapper, and more. Watch the famous little penguins feed and play in the Penguin Cove, and connect with native wildlife like tuatara and kiwi.

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# North Island travel – Hawke's Bay



## Kennedy Park

Located near the heart of Napier, Kennedy Park is an accommodation option that's fun for the whole whānau. There is so much to do onsite that you'll be tempted to spend entire days on the premises. Kids and adults will love the heated swimming complex, basketball half court, and giant outdoor chess board. Stroll the gardens or relax at the café while the tamariki let loose at the adventure playground and on the colourful jumping pillow. Spend time in the games room playing pool, table-top games, or air hockey together as a family.



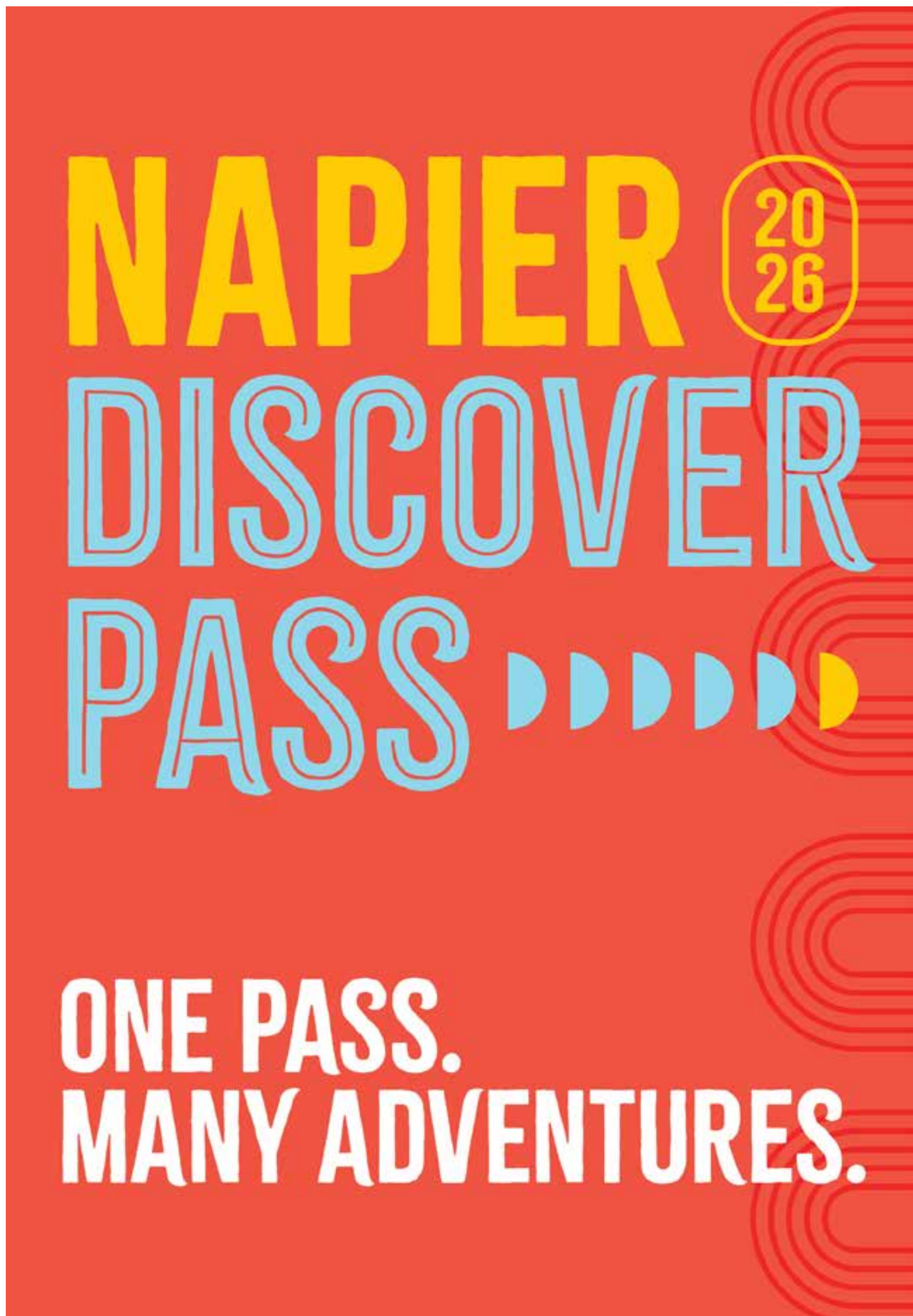
## Napier Aquatic Centre

You don't have to wait for hot summer days to enjoy a day in the water. Napier Aquatic Centre is open year-round for water-based exercise and fun. Three pools means everyone can jump in – choose from the five-lane 25-metre lap pool for walking and lane swimming, the disability-friendly six-lane Ivan Wilson Pool, or the learners' pool complete with toddler pool and mini waterfall. The complex also features waterslides, a spray park open from October to March, a beautiful outdoor area, and relaxing spas. Jump in and have fun!



## Ocean Spa

Ocean Spa is Napier's premier heated pool and fitness complex located on Marine Parade. Boasting open-air, heated, and chlorinated pools and spas with panoramic ocean views, visitors can enjoy a range of options from the toddler pool to therapeutic pools with water fountains and pool jets. Visitors can unwind in spacious outdoor spa pools and refuel with a coffee or bite to eat at Bach Café. Centrally located, Ocean Spa is the perfect spot to relax and re-energise, rain or shine.



## Discover Napier pass

Get adventurous and explore Napier with one simple pass! Take a journey through some of Napier's favourite attractions, from relaxing coastal experiences to hands on discovery and family friendly fun. Visit five iconic venues across Napier, uncover marine life, roll into skate sessions, tee off by the sea, and bring fascinating machines to life. Choose where to return for a bonus visit and make the most of every experience. Get your pass at [www.napiernz.com](http://www.napiernz.com) or instore at the Napier isite.



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# *Beautiful* **DISCOVERIES**

We think Samoa's beautiful and keep it just as island life should be - so you can enjoy a truly authentic experience. Steeped in Pacific Island heritage, we welcome you with open arms to give you a glimpse into our world and our ways. Moonlit fire dancing, music and singing are only a few of our time-honoured traditions. Come and listen to our stories while we earth cook freshly caught fish and locally grown taro. Find beautiful around every corner in Beautiful Samoa.

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# Around the world

## A unique cultural journey



The Wellington Xiamen Association warmly invites you to join an unforgettable nine-day immersive cultural tour through China's beautiful Fujian Province in April 2026.

This special journey celebrates the long-standing sister city relationship between Wellington and Xiamen – a partnership built on cultural exchange, mutual respect, and international friendship. Designed to offer both depth and discovery, the tour blends history, nature, cuisine, and contemporary Chinese life.

Tour highlights include exploring Gulangyu Island, a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its colonial architecture, leafy streets, and musical heritage; discovering the traditional Hakka Tulou Villages, extraordinary circular earthen buildings unique to Fujian; floating down the scenic Jiuqu Stream at Mount Wuyi surrounded by dramatic cliffs and lush landscapes; visiting Quanzhou, the historic gateway to the Maritime Silk Road; and tasting a wide variety of authentic Fujian cuisine throughout the journey.

This tour offers a rare opportunity to experience China's rich cultural heritage, vibrant urban centres and spectacular natural scenery, while representing Wellington abroad and strengthening ties between the two cities.

Join the Wellington Xiamen Association for a unique cultural journey to Xiamen in April 2026 by visiting [www.wxa.nz](http://www.wxa.nz) for more details about this exciting and meaningful adventure.

## Improve your English



English Teaching College (ETC) specialises in teaching English language skills for work, study, and life. We teach reading, writing, listening, and speaking from beginner to advanced. Most courses are free for New Zealand citizens or PR students and our international student prices are very competitive. We offer Literacy and Numeracy, the New Zealand Certificate in English Language (NZCEL) levels Foundation to Level 4, Demi Pair, TOEIC, IELTS, and Cambridge preparation courses. ETC welcomes New Zealand citizens and PR students as well as international students from all over the world.

Choose one of our four campuses in Wellington City, Lower Hutt, Palmerston North, or Auckland. All our schools are in the city and easy to get to by public transport. Class sizes average 12 to 14 students and are led by experienced, dedicated teaching and support staff who are committed to their students' success.

Our graduates find jobs or go to university or polytechnic and use their new English skills to benefit their community and help their children with their schoolwork.

ETC is registered with the New Zealand Government and is fully accredited by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). Higher-level programmes include unit standards which meet university entrance requirements and include successful study skills. Many of our programmes include computer skills, maths knowledge, or work skills.

Email us at [office@etc.ac.nz](mailto:office@etc.ac.nz) or come in to talk about the best course for you.



### Join the Wellington Xiamen Association for a Unique Cultural Journey to Xiamen – April 2026

The Wellington Xiamen Association warmly invites you to join an unforgettable **9-day immersive cultural tour** through China's beautiful **Fujian Province** in **April 2026**.

This special journey celebrates the long-standing **sister city relationship between Wellington and Xiamen**. A partnership built on cultural exchange, mutual respect, and international friendship. Designed to offer both depth and discovery, the tour blends history, nature, cuisine and contemporary Chinese life.

#### Tour highlights include:

- Exploring **Gulangyu Island**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its colonial architecture, leafy streets and musical heritage
- Discovering the traditional **Hakka Tulou Villages**, extraordinary circular earthen buildings unique to Fujian
- Floating down the scenic **Jiuqu Stream at Mount Wuyi**, surrounded by dramatic cliffs and lush landscapes
- Visiting **Quanzhou**, the historic gateway to the Maritime Silk Road
- Tasting a wide variety of **authentic Fujian cuisine** throughout the journey

This tour offers a rare opportunity to experience China's rich cultural heritage, vibrant urban centres and spectacular natural scenery, while representing Wellington abroad and strengthening ties between our two cities.

**Join the Wellington Xiamen Association for a Unique Cultural Journey to Xiamen – April 2026.**

**Interested? Full itinerary and costs available on request**

**Email: [secretary@wxa.nz](mailto:secretary@wxa.nz) or [president@wxa.nz](mailto:president@wxa.nz) | Website: [www.wxa.nz](http://www.wxa.nz)**

**All interested participants are warmly welcomed to join this exciting and meaningful adventure.**



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## Curated comedy



**Mamaeroa Munn, Oliver Pol, and Samantha Hannah.**

*Triple Threat Comedy* delivers what it promises on the tin: a curated comedy show that brings together three of Wellington’s snappiest stand-ups for an hour of guaranteed giggling. Running monthly(ish) and mid-week on a Wednesday, the Mon Platon Productions show will saunter into BATS Theatre on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January for its first gig of 2026.

Rostered on is 2026 Billy T nominee Samantha Hannah, 2025 NZ International Comedy Festival Spirit of the Festival winner Mamaeroa Munn, and Oliver Pol, who does comedy as a means of expressing aloud his existential terrors without ruining weddings/birthdays/funerals.

What sets *Triple Threat Comedy* apart is its focus on quality over quantity, ensuring huge laughs, fancy lights, and comfy seats your grandma would approve of at every offering. With Nina Hogg and Austin Harrison either behind the tech desk or emceeing and 15 to 20-minute sets, audiences enjoy an elevated experience where they have the chance to connect with each comedian and get to know their style.

*Triple Threat Comedy* has also been created with comedians in mind. With longer slots comes an opportunity to test longer jokes or more complex sets without committing to a full hour of material.

“Mon Platon really believes that Wellington is a city which deserves a professional comedy scene, and we sure as heck have the talent,” Harrison says. “With more shows like *Triple Threat*, we want to make Wellington a place that comedy audiences and performers can thrive.”

## The sound of summer



Set against the shimmering backdrop of the Aotea Lagoon on a blissful summer afternoon, Porirua City Brass will present *Brass in the Park*, a free outdoor concert on Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup> of January at 2pm.

Audiences of all ages are invited to settle in for the family-friendly summer spectacle at the park with a picnic, blanket, and chairs. Showcasing the versatility and energy of one of the Wellington region’s leading community brass bands, the programme will feature a fun and floating mix of light classical music, popular favourites, and toe-tapping brass band classics.

“*Brass in the Park* is all about sharing live music in an informal, welcoming setting,” Sally, the spokesperson for Porirua City Brass, says. “We love performing outdoors and connecting with the community, especially during summer when people can relax and enjoy music together.”

Porirua City Brass is a long-standing community band with members from across Porirua and the wider Wellington region. The band regularly performs at civic events, community concerts, and competitions, and is proud to make live brass music accessible to everyone.

Porirua City Brass carries the sound and spirit of their city in their every performance. They are committed to showcasing the highest standards of musicianship, with every note driven by a shared goal: to give back to the community that supports them and to keep Porirua’s musical story alive.

So, pack your picnic and tune in to summer sounds at *Brass in the Park*.

## Below The Worms



**Photo by Ruby Crossan.**

Best described as a children’s show for adults, *Below The Worms* invites audiences to see the world through the eyes of two tamariki as they embark on a mission filled with peril and delight. It’s a work equal parts heart-wrenching, feral, and funny that delves into the realm of magical realism with a smattering of absurdism.

*Below The Worms*, returning to the New Zealand Fringe Festival for its second season thanks to the Parkin Development Award, springs up this time around in BATS Theatre between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of February after enjoying a run across the road in the courtyard of The Welsh Dragon in 2025.

Alongside new additions to the crew such as veteran practitioner Alison Bruce in the director seat and Nadia Officer, Cypha Clark, Eve Naicker, and Kimiora Honeycombe as the chorus, the familiar faces of musical director Sarah Lawrence and designer Grace O’Brien join the creative team helmed by original leads and creators Sugar Rea-Bruce and Te Ata Tu Patelesio.

Together, they craft a tale of two families that live in homes within the same house, split in half. Despite its terrors and delights, the homes live in harmony until a kept secret rewrites everything the children thought they knew about their world. With a garden of singing worms, a bloodthirsty hound, and a witch who lives next door, *Below The Worms* is full of unexplained magic that slips into the ordinary.

## An eclectic mix



**Photo by Hayden Hockly Photography.**

Sweeping The Rogue & Vagabond audiences into a surreal, cinematic world on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January, Oscar Lavën and the Elegant Calamity Orchestra present the kaleidoscopic album *Elegant Calamity*, released just days ago on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of 2026.

The album was recently performed to a sold-out crowd at the Wellington Jazz Festival and follows Lavën’s internationally acclaimed debut *Questions in Red*, about which *London Jazz News* raved “you could drop the needle on any spot and find satisfying, thoroughly involving music”.

Bringing together strings, woodwinds, brass, percussionists, and a deep-digging rhythm section, the 16-piece orchestra combines colour and spontaneity to create music influenced by trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie’s Afro-Cuban experiments, Ennio Morricone’s atmospheric film soundtracks, bandoneon master Astor Piazzolla’s nuevo tango, the sophistication of Duke Ellington’s jazz orchestra, and the excitement of bassist Charles Mingus’ gospel-infusion.

“I wrote *Elegant Calamity* in pursuit of a sound that allows the personalities of the eclectic mix of musicians to shine through,” Lavën says.

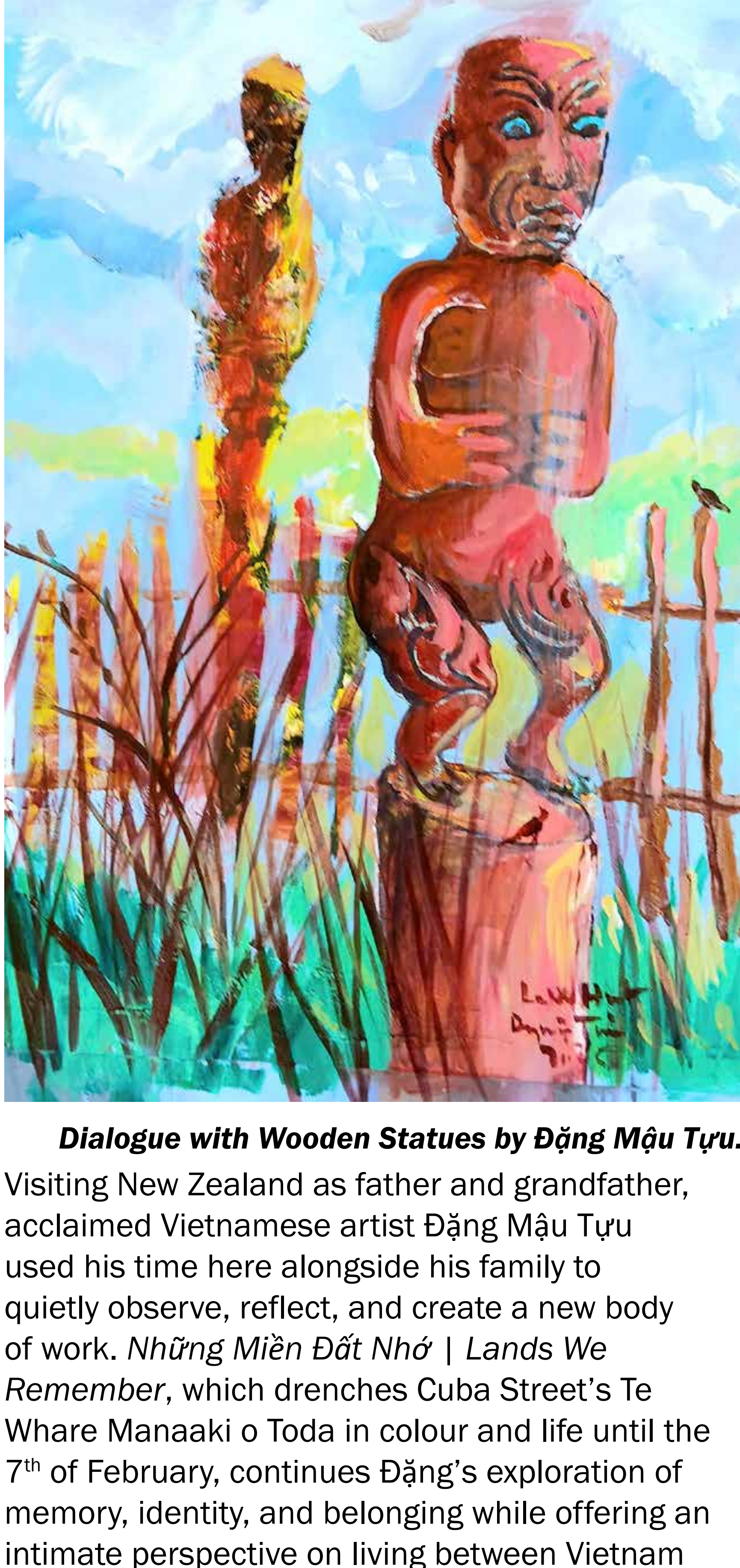
“These players represent different corners of the vibrant New Zealand art music scene, and I hope listeners around the globe will be able to appreciate this through this album.”

The record itself blends “forward-facing boldness with a certain shade of cinematic nostalgia”, Lavën continues, adding that it was made through trumpeter Michael Costeloe’s Jazz Orchestra Composer Series, which gives musicians the freedom to create and a platform to perform.

“This was a very spirited, joyful process”, Lavën says. “I hope people will enjoy listening to *Elegant Calamity* as much as we enjoyed playing it”.



## Searching and painting



### ***Dialogue with Wooden Statues by Đặng Mậu Tựu.***

Visiting New Zealand as father and grandfather, acclaimed Vietnamese artist Đặng Mậu Tựu used his time here alongside his family to quietly observe, reflect, and create a new body of work. *Những Miền Đất Nhớ | Lands We Remember*, which drenches Cuba Street's Te Whare Manaaki o Toda in colour and life until the 7<sup>th</sup> of February, continues Đặng's exploration of memory, identity, and belonging while offering an intimate perspective on living between Vietnam and Aotearoa. Capturing moments of connection, unfamiliarity, and shared humanity through a Vietnamese artistic lens, the 30-plus artworks act as a cultural bridge while recounting a deeply personal story.

### ***What draws you to painting and how would you describe your style?***

I paint out of an inner need, with the aim of reflecting the life around me through emotion and thought. So I paint what I see through my own personal lens, and also things that seem almost invisible, like the movement and flow of everything around us.

I'm not satisfied with still, fixed objects. I'm always drawn toward ideas, toward breaking familiar structures. I paint when I feel like it. To me, everything can be beautiful if you go into its essence and try to live with it. Sometimes my paintings are figurative, but I don't stop at what is commonly seen. That's when the searching begins. At other times, the painting becomes an expression of something deeply personal. It is simply 'what it is', moving within my own world of colour and line.

I never feel satisfied enough to stop searching. That journey, up to now, is still continuing.

### ***How do you bring two cultures together in your exhibition?***

This exhibition came about through a kind of fate, starting with my trip to New Zealand to visit my son's family. I was deeply moved by the beauty of the landscape and the friendliness and kindness of the people here, so I painted to capture those feelings. Viet Hub NZ knew about my work and wanted to organise an exhibition to introduce my paintings to the Vietnamese community as well as to art lovers in this beautiful country.

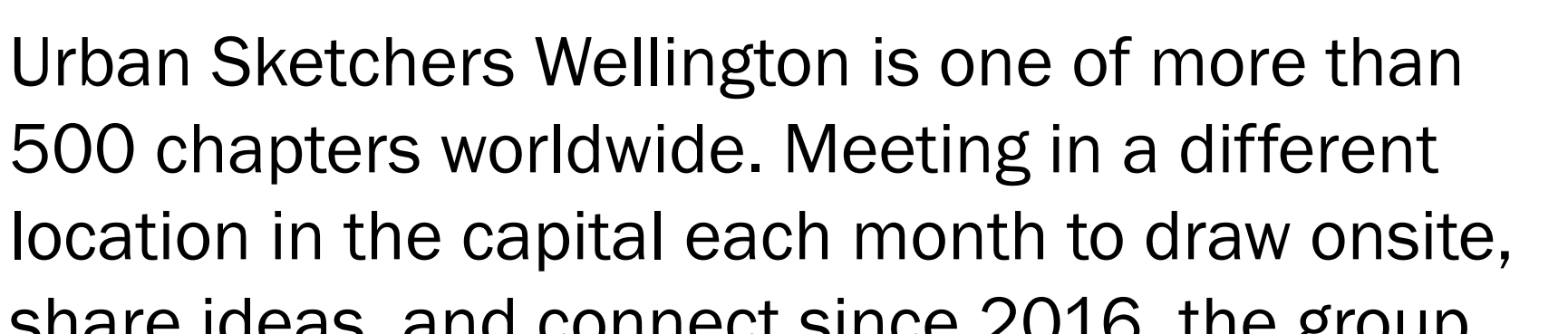
What is in my paintings? They reflect my thoughts and feelings about the landscapes and people here, and also about Vietnam. They are like visual notes made by a travelling artist. I noticed cultural similarities in the sculptural traditions of Māori and the peoples of the Pacific Islands.

I've travelled to many places and encountered things that feel both unfamiliar and familiar between these two lands – my homeland and Aotearoa, the Land of the Long White Cloud and strong winds, where people are gentle, value peace, and are full of humanity, and where animals, plants, and nature are treated with love.

### ***What do you hope visitors take away from Những Miền Đất Nhớ | Lands We Remember?***

A sense of connection. I don't expect much, just that, even in a small way, viewers might find something in the paintings that brings them a little joy. That alone is enough to make me happy.

## Connect and create



Urban Sketchers Wellington is one of more than 500 chapters worldwide. Meeting in a different location in the capital each month to draw onsite, share ideas, and connect since 2016, the group presents *Showing the City – One Drawing at a Time* at Parliament's Te Papakura Gallery until the 19<sup>th</sup> of April to celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

"People have been sketching for centuries to record their ideas, plan out paintings in advance, and capture their surroundings in a quick, direct way. Usually when we use the word 'sketch' we mean something quick, rough, and immediate compared to a 'finished' work of art which might have been laboured on at home or in a studio", artist Anne Taylor says. "Sketching on location means drawing the scene in front of you, which might be an indoor or outdoor location, anything from a cityscape to country landscape. Urban sketching isn't necessarily just urban locations but can be anywhere".

Featuring over 100 original sketches, including unique perspectives of Parliament's iconic architecture and glimpses from inside the buildings, the exhibition provides an interactive experience with a dedicated colouring and activity table that invites visitors of all ages to engage with the artwork and explore their own creativity.

"We hope that some of our passion for our beautiful city, plus the fun of urban sketching might rub off," Taylor continues. "We've tried to show that anyone can be an urban sketcher; it's just a matter of giving it a try with some simple materials like pencil and paper, then putting in the time to practice".

## Channelling life



### ***Nontropolis at Raetihi by Marcel Baaijens.***

Nontropolis is a neologism coined by multimedia artist Marcel Baaijens.

"A nontropolis is an old-world-charm tiny town, village, or neighbourhood that grew organically over time," he says. "The organic nature of nontropolises resonates with the human spirit and encourages our souls to sing".

Inspired by the vernacular architecture and urban scapes of small towns in Italy, Greece, Spain, and Malta, as well as the nature of New Zealand, Baaijens presents an exhibition of 650 colourful miniatures on paper, driftwood, furniture, and more at Thistle Hall between the 27<sup>th</sup> of January and the 1<sup>st</sup> of February.

"Urban sketching in nontropolises forces me to slow down. It enables me to observe and connect with the essence of a place", Baaijens says. "My experience as an architect, artist, and energy healing facilitator enabled me to recognise the ability of nontropolises to channel the flow of, and hold space for, vital life force energies. Modern planned cities, designed for speed and efficiency, often lack such qualities."

An old model of existence has caused depopulation in many of these small towns, but new technologies and economies are enabling a shift back, Baaijens says – a theme that he'll explore more in a talk at the gallery on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January.

Joining Baaijens at the *Nontropolis* exhibition is Wellington-based author Lynsey Gedye to celebrate the release of his book *100 Love Stories: A Quiet Revolution in How We See Love* on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January alongside a few short films of the stories. The collection was inspired by and written about people living in a coastal nontropolis and explores love in everyday life through stories that overlap and capture "something honest and human".

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# Tall Poppy



My Tall Poppy is transforming the way property is bought and sold in New Zealand, and it is something you will only find at Tall Poppy Real Estate. Built specifically for the Tall Poppy network, this proprietary technology brings the entire sales process into one smart, secure online environment.

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For vendors, this means greater clarity and confidence throughout the process. Offers are managed digitally by their Tall Poppy agent, with clear presentation of terms and conditions, allowing informed decisions without unnecessary delays. Once an offer is accepted, legal documentation and communications are triggered instantly, meaning vendors can move forward from anywhere in the world and celebrate sooner.

For Tall Poppy agents, My Tall Poppy is a genuine competitive advantage. It streamlines administration, reduces risk, and ensures every step of the transaction is managed professionally and compliantly. Agents spend less time chasing paperwork and more time focused on what matters most, achieving great outcomes for their clients.

My Tall Poppy reflects Tall Poppy's commitment to innovation, fairness, and smarter ways of working. It is not bolt-on software or third-party tech. It is purpose-built, continuously evolving, and designed to support better results across every transaction.

In a market where speed, clarity, and trust matter more than ever, My Tall Poppy is setting a new standard for how real estate is done at Tall Poppy Real Estate.

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Excellence underscores everything Robyn Bond and Pete Kruk do as Lower Hutt's Tall Poppy real estate agents. As a professional, results-focused team, they pride themselves on helping buyers and sellers achieve their property goals with minimal stress and maximum satisfaction.

Robyn brings 19 years of experience, tireless enthusiasm, and a passion for helping people, always going the extra mile to make her clients happy. Pete's background in sales and marketing in real estate, combined with his practical manner, makes him an excellent negotiator and seller. Together, they make every property transaction seamless.

## Kapiti



### VANESSA BOND & STEVEN BROWN

Sales Consultants

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Vanessa Bond and Steven Brown of Tall Poppy Kapiti have one goal when it comes to real estate: make buying or selling a home as smooth, stress-free, and seamless as possible. Whether you're ready to list, looking to buy your first home, or searching for an investment property, they can provide expert guidance and support the whole way through.

For them, real estate is more than just about property; it's about people. They offer a tailored service that goes beyond simply what's required thanks to a client-focused approach. With professional expertise, local knowledge, and a community-first ethos, Bond & Brown put you first.

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Sales Consultant

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Karen Macdonald of Tall Poppy Manawātū prides herself on professionalism, integrity, and trustworthiness. She has a proven track record and a huge portfolio that includes everything from lifestyle properties to character cottages.

"Buying a home is the biggest investment most people will ever make," Karen says. "My aim is to honour the trust that people put in me by ensuring they have the most authentic and best house buying experience ever, while managing the process for them through to an excellent result."

For a personal approach and a smooth process, entrust your property goals to Karen.



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# Retirement



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# Retirement

## Strategy for success



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With over 25 years of experience in the finance sector, Rodney Varga is the driving force behind Enrich. He runs a passionate and knowledgeable team who are committed to helping clients achieve better financial outcomes through robust understanding of market conditions and comparing these to your needs and requirements. Exceptional customer service is the top priority, which is why the Enrich team focus on building lasting and trusting relationships. They work alongside you to guide you through difficult financial decision-making processes, helping you feel equipped and able to adapt as life evolves and your goals change.

Enrich is available to help with your immediate and future financial needs. In today's complex world, effective wealth management is essential for individuals seeking to secure their financial future. Enrich guides clients towards financial freedom by outlining key opportunities and navigating personal circumstances.

Enrich also provides KiwiSaver advice. The savings scheme gives Kiwis the opportunity to build a nest egg for retirement, but the fund can also be used in other circumstances. The team can also assist you with options for retirement planning by creating a strategy for your success.

## Making the right choice for 2026



Wakefield Homestead aims to make a positive difference in people's lives. A family working with families, this beautiful rest home is nestled into Wakefield Village, just a 20-minute drive from the bustling and creative hub of Nelson. Welcoming, comfortable, safe, well connected, community minded, and caring, Wakefield Homestead is a lovely place to call home.

There are 23 beds at Wakefield Homestead, split between single and couples' rooms, with vacancies opening soon. Catering to a wide range of age groups, Wakefield offers respite, palliative, and primary health funded short-term care, plus day stays and carer support. The team comprises three registered nurses, healthcare assistants, an activities coordinator, a physiotherapist, social worker, podiatrist, dietician, spiritual advisor, kaumatua, hairdresser, and a pool of kind volunteers.

Residents living at Wakefield Homestead are encouraged to make themselves at home. The team suggests bringing personal furniture and special items to decorate the space, and sometimes even a pet can be brought along. Meals are homecooked, healthy, and delicious. There are shared lounges for socialising, shops around the corner, a beautiful park next door, and a busy activities and social calendar. Residents can go on group outings every week, get involved in a hobby, learn new skills, play music, dance, participate in games, and so much more.

Wakefield Homestead truly feels like home.



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# Retirement

## A change of pace – Auckland



Spend your days relaxing rather than stressing and enjoying rather than worrying by joining Acacia Cove, a country-style retirement village that promotes care, community, and connection. Settled into the Wattle Downs Peninsula, a golf and country club to the east and an estuary teeming with wildlife to the west, Acacia Cove is an idyllic place to call home.

Acacia Cove features 217 villas and 15 fully self-contained apartments that offer both independence and access to a vibrant and active community. All architecturally crafted by professional designers, interior decorators, and landscapers, each villa has its own private courtyard, spacious living area, and one to three bedrooms. The two and three-bedroom apartments enjoy a paved courtyard or a spacious deck. What's more, the gardens are fully maintained, even if you choose to add your own personal touches.

The lodge-like community centre is framed by magical sunset views and features plenty of amenities, including a billiard table, gym, spa bath, hairdressing salon, library with computers, nurse's station, and an open fireplace. The purpose-built meeting room is the hub for all kinds of activities – from walking groups to the garden club, there are over 31 weekly activities on the schedule.

On the grounds are also a bowling green, BBQ area, heated indoor pool, and restaurant, which is the perfect place to enjoy the sun and the estuary views in the company of neighbours, friends, and whānau.

## Have it your way



After working hard and saving for decades, retirement should be about enjoying life to the fullest and taking advantage of the comforts your years of dedication have brought.

Whether you want to travel or get stuck into old hobbies and new ones, work away on your own home or live a worry-free existence, let the wind take you anywhere or become part of a tightknit community, New Zealand is a retiree's dream.

If it's a retirement village you're after, there are plenty of options across the length and breadth of our country offering all levels of care and all manner of living arrangements. Some are nestled into quaint villages while others are in the heart of the city or tucked away into the beautiful countryside.

There are also plenty of health, financial, and legal services available across the motu that can help you make the most of your retirement. From diversifying your assets and helping with savings to drafting up all the legal necessities that come with this time of your life, and, of course, health services for whatever you may need, Aotearoa has got you covered.

Not to mention a wealth of accessible, beautiful outdoor spaces and public facilities where you can enjoy old hobbies or pick up new ones. Boating and fishing, hiking and biking, socialising and playing club sports, crafting and cooking are all at your fingertips. So what are you waiting for? Take the leap and enjoy your retirement your way!



**CARE, COMMUNITY, AND CONNECTION**  
Acacia Cove, a country-style village situated on the beautiful Wattle Downs Peninsula has 31 weekly activities.




For those who appreciate the tranquility of an estuary setting Acacia Cove has it all, as well as its own restaurant, heated indoor pool, library, bowling green and gym.

Whether you choose to live in a villa or one of our luxurious apartments, you'll have the security of a 24 hour, fully monitored emergency call system built in.

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# Retirement All welcome in the Valley!

Independence and strong community connection live hand in hand at Wainuiomata Masonic Village. Our beautifully designed independent living retirement village has 80 easy-care villas built over the last five years, a vibrant Village Hub, and a thriving community of more than 100 residents.

We're located in the heart of Wainuiomata Valley and a very short walk to Woolworths, Mitre 10, pharmacies, hairdressers, and many takeaways. We're next to a medical centre, opposite a pharmacy and dentist, and beside a park and children's playground. It's a 15-minute drive to Queensgate Shopping Centre and less than half an hour into Wellington.

Quality of life is front of mind at Wainuiomata Masonic Village. The golden years are meant for enjoying passions, hobbies, and time with friends and loved ones, which is why the facilities are thoughtfully designed to cater to the needs of seniors, providing safe and comfortable spaces to relax, socialise, and thrive. From well-maintained common areas to private residences, group activities to cosy corners, every aspect of the village prioritises resident wellbeing.

We're a friendly village community, offering many activities as well as resident-run events and the opportunity to host your own celebrations in our Village Hub. Wainuiomata Masonic Village prides itself on being more than a place to live. It's a home – where meaningful connections are made and memories are cherished.

Call our friendly village manager Esther to come for a visit and find out more at [www.masonicvillages.co.nz](http://www.masonicvillages.co.nz)

## Choose community – Ashburton

Rosebank Lifecare offers a place of tranquillity, security, and care. It encourages residents to find what makes them happy and provides them with the support they need to build the life they want.

The goal at Rosebank Lifecare is for all residents to retain their independence while living life to the fullest, regardless of their health or condition. Named Aged Advisor People's Choice Awards for Best Small Retirement or Lifestyle Village in 2019, Rosebank ensures everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Rosebank residents enjoy a sense of community, with the freedom to choose their level of involvement in village life. A centrally located hub provides a space for family members to gather, and for residents to meet and enjoy each other's company. With access to a hospital, rest home facility, and more independent arrangements, as well as palliative, rehabilitative, and convalescent services, there are options available to suit all kinds of circumstances.

27 two and three-bedroom villas and 22 serviced apartments are also available. These studios and one-bedroom suites offer extra support without compromising freedom. Here, residents can live privately while receiving the added benefits of daily meals, laundry, house-keeping assistance, and care options. The villas are large, spacious, and the best of both worlds – independence, with companionship and help just seconds away.

If life is what you make it, Rosebank Lifecare could be the best decision you've ever made.

## Helping your way

Now under a new name but still providing the same level of high-quality, personalised care tailored to each client's needs, Angels Homecare NZ is a boutique care service provider based in Paraparaumu Beach catering to elderly individuals and those with disabilities.

Angels Homecare NZ was founded in 2016 by Connie Paul. A doctor in the Philippines wanting to register in New Zealand, she decided to pursue her passion for gerontology at Auckland University. Having worked in the healthcare industry for decades, she decided to start her own home health service company that catered to clients' individual needs.

Unlike commercial agencies, Angels Homecare NZ is committed to matching each client with a suitable caregiver. When a new client comes onboard, Connie will be the first person who comes to their home before they're assigned a regular caregiver. In this way, she can assess their requirements, situation, preferences, and personality so that they will be matched with someone who suits them best.

Angels Homecare NZ's wraparound services span everything from cleaning and cooking to helping with chores and companionship. Whether you need help doing laundry or want support during a doctor's appointment, would like to declutter your home or require assistance getting about, or even if you're in a rest home or hospital and would like one-on-one care and companionship, call on Angels Homecare NZ when you need them most.

## Know your bones

Osteoporosis, a common chronic condition among adults over 50, weakens bones and causes them to become brittle and more susceptible to fractures from minor falls and bumps. It's estimated that 22,300 fragility fractures occur annually in New Zealand.

Risk factors for osteoporosis include a family history, broken bones, previous fragility fractures, low body weight, some medical conditions, and certain medications, plus menopause has been shown to have a direct relationship with bone density loss, which can lead to the development of osteoporosis.

There are a number of measures you can adopt to reduce your risk of developing osteoporosis, such as maintaining a healthy body weight, doing regular weight-bearing exercises to strengthen your bones, avoiding smoking, limiting your alcohol intake to a healthy level, ensuring an adequate dietary intake of calcium, and getting 15 to 20 minutes of sun exposure each day to maintain vitamin D levels.

You can also familiarise yourself with your own risk by completing the online risk assessment tool Know Your Bones™. Giving the results to your doctor can be valuable for mapping out a future health plan.

If you have more than one risk factor, ask your GP for a screening so you can be prepared and proactive. Find out more and access resources online at [www.osteoporosis.org.nz](http://www.osteoporosis.org.nz)



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**Angels Homecare NZ Ltd**

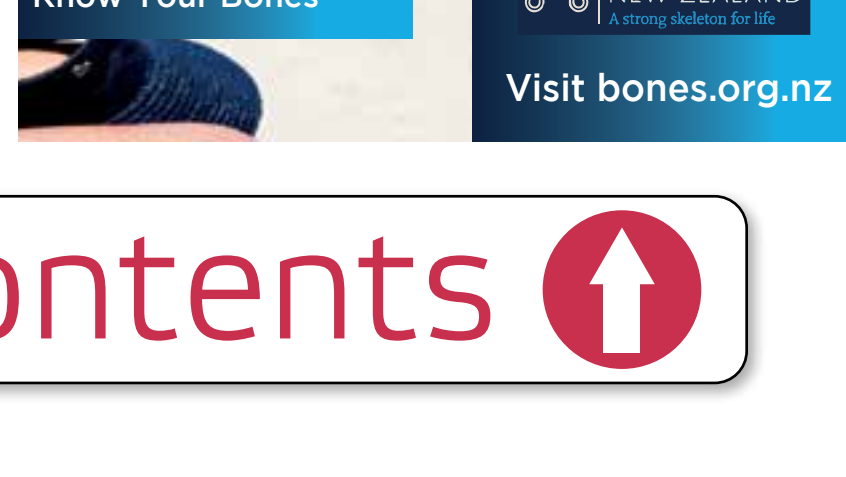
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# Puzzles

8	1	9					7	4
	5				6			
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20						21						
22									23			

## Across

- 1 - Tiny arachnid (4)
- 3 - Relating to speech sounds (8)
- 9 - Caring for (7)
- 10 - Lady (5)
- 11 - Leaf of a fern (5)
- 12 - Do repeatedly (7)
- 13 - Cloud type (6)
- 15 - Severe; stern (6)
- 17 - Be subjected to (7)
- 18 - Conveyed by gestures (5)
- 20 - Avoid (5)
- 21 - Official instruction (7)
- 22 - Reserved in advance (3,5)
- 23 - Small vipers (4)

## Down

- 1 - Makers (13)
- 2 - Trunk of the body (5)
- 4 - Scottish dish (6)
- 5 - Second part of the Bible (3,9)
- 6 - Kettledrums (7)
- 7 - Satisfaction (13)
- 8 - Squint harder (anag) (12)
- 14 - Shining (7)
- 16 - Condemned to a grim fate (6)
- 19 - Water-filled ditches around castles (5)

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# Reviews

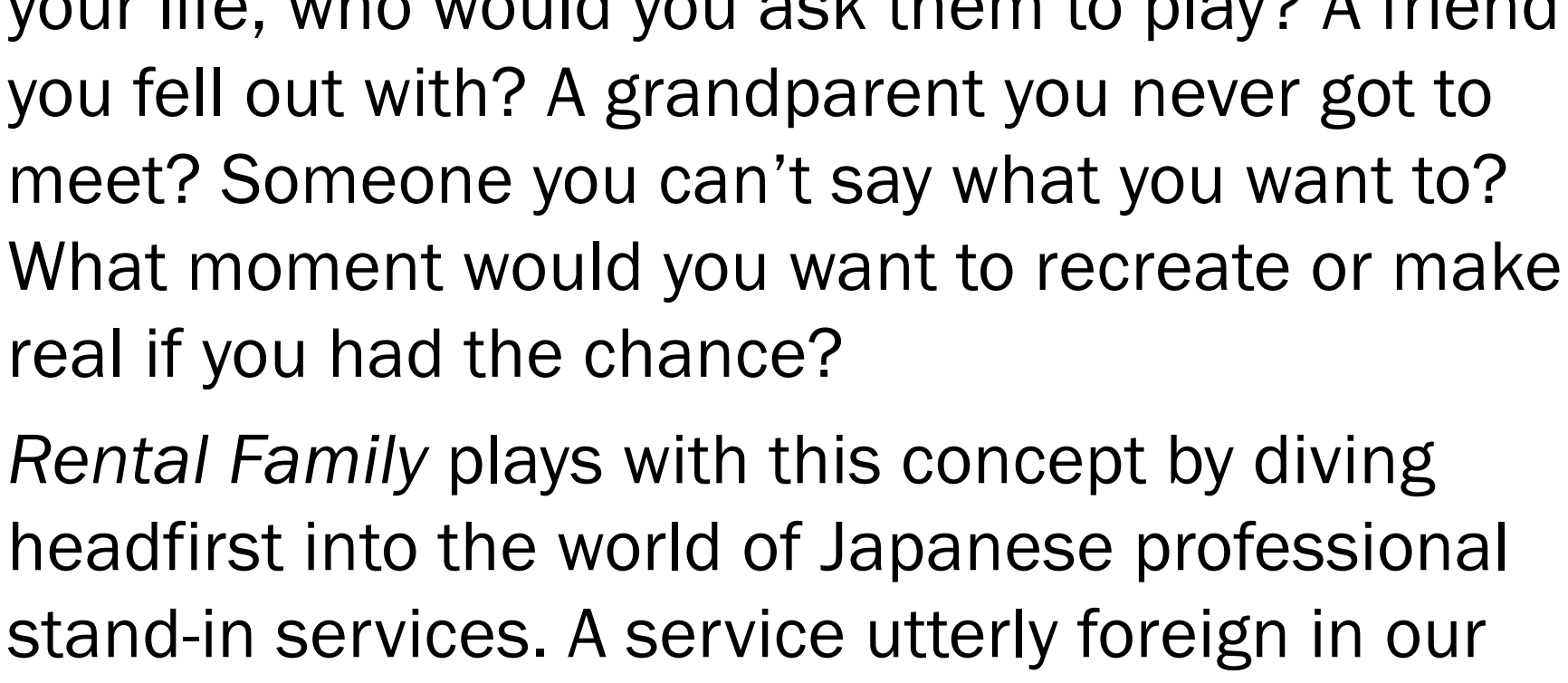
## Rental Family

110 minutes

M

★★★★

Reviewed by Alessia Belsito-Riera



If you were to hire an actor to play someone in your life, who would you ask them to play? A friend you fell out with? A grandparent you never got to meet? Someone you can’t say what you want to? What moment would you want to recreate or make real if you had the chance?

*Rental Family* plays with this concept by diving headfirst into the world of Japanese professional stand-in services. A service utterly foreign in our Western world, the industry has been around since the 1990s in Japan. As the 2025 dramedy explains, it’s an enterprise that sells emotions. In a culture where there are strict codes, their services provide alternatives.

“We play roles in clients’ lives. Parents, siblings, boyfriends, girlfriends, best friends,” Rental Family business owner Shinji Tada (Takehiro Hira) says. “And help them connect to what’s missing.”

In director Hikari’s film, Phillip Vanderploeg (Brendan Fraser) lands himself a job quite by accident as the “token white guy” at Tada’s business. The struggling actor who has only booked small roles since his claim to fame as a superhero fighting gingivitis in a toothpaste commercial will now play very real roles in people’s lives. A husband at a wedding, a friend to a famous ageing actor (played exceptionally by Akira Emoto), and a father to young Mia (Shannon Gorman). What Phillip doesn’t realise is that as he forms genuine bonds with these people, the lines between performance and reality will begin to blur.

Fraser delivers an exceptionally sparkling performance, filling each scene with tender yet concentrated emotion. Each movement is intentional yet utterly natural. Mari Yamamoto too is magnetic as Phillip’s coworker Aiko and Gorman offers sensitivity and intent beyond her years.

With postcard-worthy cinematography from Takuro Ishizaka and production design by Norihiro Isoda and Masako Takayama that beautifully balances the sterility of public spaces and the rich personality of private ones, *Rental Family* is exquisitely crafted. Where it shines most, however, is in Hikari and Stephen Blahut’s screenplay, which offers such thoughtfully woven dialogue that it feels like you’re watching a poem unfold in real time that quietly whittles away at the moral complexities of the service to reveal the beauty of human connection.

## A chat with Tung...

## Thank you and shut up!

by Madelaine Empson

**You recently went to Japan and Vietnam for two weeks during the Christmas holidays! Let’s start with Japan.**

My holiday started a year ago in my mind, because everyone around me was talking about Japan and I was mesmerised. That’s when we started planning to go. Finally, we arrived, but I couldn’t believe I was in Japan even when I landed. I stood at the subway for two minutes, having a kind of culture shock! There were so many people walking in every single direction you could imagine, and none of them looked at me because they were too busy. So, first impression counts: I loved Japan from that very moment. Living in New Zealand for so long, that was a treat for the eyes.

We started our Japan vacation with a lot of food – my favourite was wagyu beef, which I’m sure you’ve all heard about, but truly, it melts in your mouth. We saw a lot of attractions, like the Osaka Castle. Honestly, I felt like a geisha in there! All of the things you’ve seen in the movies, they were there in the castle.

The highlight of the trip would be the bullet train, which we rode from Tokyo to Osaka. If New Zealand had one, it would be amazing. Imagine being able to get from Wellington to Auckland in two hours!

**Too right! What were some of the challenges?**

In Japan, there was a bit of a language barrier, but these days, Google Translate does all the work. In Vietnam, the heat was a bit of a challenge for us because we’d come from a New Zealand summer to winter in Japan, then back to summer in Vietnam. But of course, I could adapt easily. We loved the food in Vietnam so much. If we could bring it all here (without customs restrictions) I wouldn’t have to go back and forth so much [laughs].

**What was the highlight of your Vietnamese trip?**

Seeing my family and taking Mum and Dad to the hospital for their health check-up. It was so surprising, the difference between the public and private hospitals. At the public hospitals, you’ll find the best doctors in the world, but the crappiest service. At the private ones, it’s the exact opposite!

**What most inspired you while you were away?**

The energy level of the people in Japan. We saw a 90-year-old chef preparing fish from scratch, from A to Z, it was just amazing.

**Anything else you’d like to add?**

If you want to learn how to bow, go to Japan. If you want to learn how to differentiate between the phrases cảm ơn (thank you) and câm mồm (shut up), go to Vietnam!

**I sense another story there...**

I’m saving that for my next column!

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# Let loose

by **Alessia Belsito-Riera**



“The kaupapa of Waste Fest is relatively simple,” organiser Rae says. “Trash around to some bands and have a good night”.

Although originally firmly rooted in punk, since 2014 the yearly ritual has evolved to reflect the diverse genres coursing through the local scene into an ode to New Zealand’s finest punk, metal, and hardcore bands, Rae explains, adding that Ben Mulchin, “Valhalla’s owner and guiding light, has been organising Waste Fest year in, year out until 2025”.

Now at the helm of the festival, Rae says that “2026 Waste Fest is now a one-day event with 12 rowdy bands ready to blow you away. With a variety of bands from ska to grindcore, this year’s Waste Fest is sure to be one for the ages.”

Ready to unleash some chaos in the mosh pit at Valhalla this Waitangi Weekend on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February are nu-metal band Mothburn, ska group Dimestone Skanks, grindcore outfits Maced and In Chains Of Ice, hardcore punks The Vile Maxim, emo-violence band Ruminari, metal heads Retaliator, deathcore four-piece Marmablade, and hardcore heathens Shuriken, Strap, Broken By Design, and Cease and Desist.

Perhaps Waste Fest will inspire “folk to get involved in the scene through forming new bands or putting on gigs”, Rae muses. Whatever it stirs within, Waste Fest will “create a space for patrons to let loose (responsibly)”.

## Hot to go!



Snap and clap and touch your toes, raise your hands, now body roll down to Ivy Bar & Cabaret, which will transform into the Pink Pony Club for *The Giver! A Chappell Roan Drag Show* on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February.

Celebrating the *Femininomenon* that is queer pop icon Chappell Roan as she makes her Aotearoa debut at Laneway just days before on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February, *The Giver* delivers an evening high in glamour, drag, and camp chaos. Don your white face paint, glitter up, and hit that *Sugar High* with the greatest hits from your favourite artist’s favourite artist accompanied by performances to *Die Young* for.

The lineup is a *Kaleidoscope* of talent ready to indulge your *Guilty Pleasure* that includes Veronica Heart, Myrtle Montgomery, and Maximum Clownage. From hits to deep cuts, they’ll be sure to channel every era of Chappell.

As Wellington’s top drag and burlesque stars serve up Chappell Roan chart-toppers with jaw-dropping looks, powerhouse performances, and unapologetic theatrics, Velma Cherry will keep audiences occupied in the *Meantime* as the evening’s *HOT TO GO!* host. The cherry on top of every show, Velma is a multi-award-winning burlesque and pole performer who loves all things sparkly, sexy, and silly – in short, Wellington’s very own *Super Graphic Ultra Modern Girl!*

With plenty of fun to follow *After Midnight*, you’d have to stop the world just to stop the feeling. So keep on dancing at *The Giver! A Chappell Roan Drag Show*.

## Trade yawns for yes!



If you’ve ever found yourself in the club doing more yawning than boogieing, then this one is for you. Homo Before Ten is a high-energy, queer day of dancing designed to have you cutting shapes on the floor all evening and tucked into bed by midnight.

Hosted by the legendary Wellington Partyboys, Homo Before Ten trades a sunrise finish for a concentrated burst of afternoon adrenaline at Eva Pub on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January. Here, you can harness your post-lunch coffee and sip your signature drink without the fear of reckoning come morning. An event open to everyone, this FRISKY party celebrates Wellington’s Rainbow community, welcoming all queer, genderqueer, trans, and non-binary folks as well as allies to indulge in a fun, safe, and inclusive environment.

Resident DJ Jimmy Fade will be behind the decks, delivering chart-toppers flipped for the club, iconic pop moments, queer anthems, feel-good bangers, and those massive, sing-along drops that define a great night (or afternoon) out.

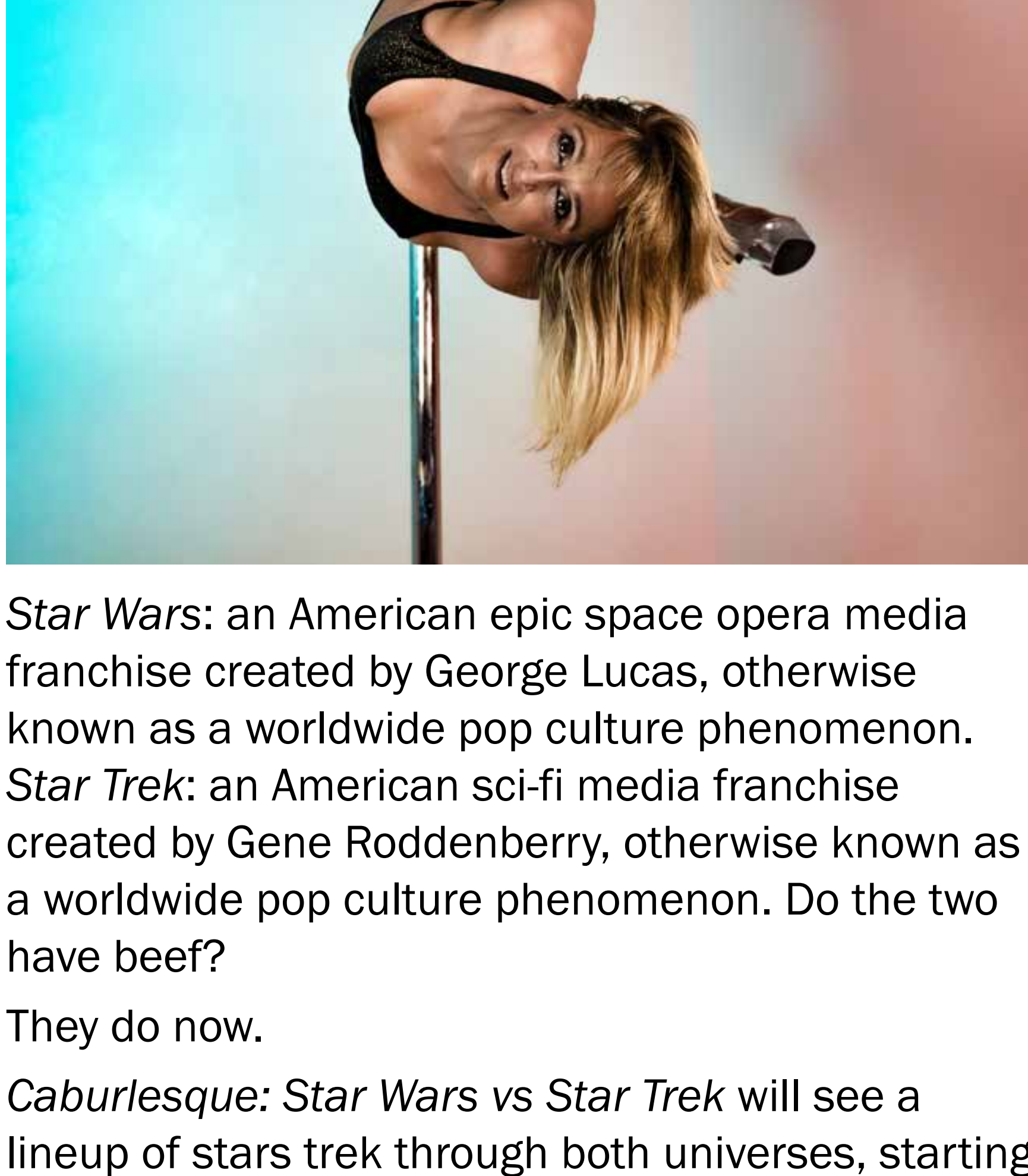
In a bold move to brighten the dancefloor, Homo Before Ten has a strict no black and grey policy.

So, pick out your brightest clothes during your lunchtime pre-drinks party. The dress code is colourful, summery, fun, and flirty, which means it’s time to don your crop tops, mini-skirts, festival get-ups, fluoro singlets, and colourful harnesses to help make Eva Pub a kaleidoscope of colour and (controlled) chaos.

Say goodbye to the traditional club schedule at Homo Before Ten. Who says mischief has to wait until midnight?

## The chosen one

by **Madelaine Empson**



*Star Wars*: an American epic space opera media franchise created by George Lucas, otherwise known as a worldwide pop culture phenomenon.

*Star Trek*: an American sci-fi media franchise created by Gene Roddenberry, otherwise known as a worldwide pop culture phenomenon. Do the two have beef?

They do now.

*Caburlesque*: *Star Wars* vs *Star Trek* will see a lineup of stars trek through both universes, starting wars with burlesque, pole, cabaret, and belly dance acts to determine who will be the chosen one and the top wookiee of space travel.

As a long-time nerd and Trekker with a burning passion for sci-fi, “that’s like the best theme I could ask for from a show”, Elisa [pictured] beams. “From cheeky campy 60s galore – sexy aliens, science paradoxes, funny creatures – to epic battles, iconic music, deep philosophical questions, and even a recognised official religion, the two sagas are the core of my cultural references and an almost infinite well of inspiration for new routines.”

Joining Elisa onstage will be “sci-fi geek since childhood” Pip E-Lysaah; Anglebert Humpermink, who “loves the fact that both of these franchises go way back and keep getting reinvented just like performers”; JoJo Bellini, who calls *Star Wars* vs *Star Trek* “the ultimate in geekdom” and exclaims “what is not to like”; and more (inter)stellar performers like Ana Ci, Natasha Ploy, Victor Victorious, and Lady Sane, who has found “so much to play with theatrically” in exploring this theme.

“Sci-fi gives permission to go larger than life, and that’s where I thrive as a performer.”

Hop onboard the *USS Enterprise* with MC Sadie von Scrumptious in the captain’s seat on Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup> of February. Destination: The Fringe Bar, Wellington, A Galaxy Far, Far Away.



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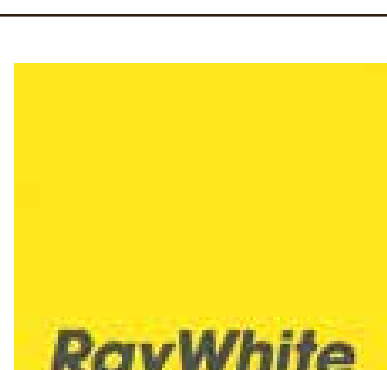
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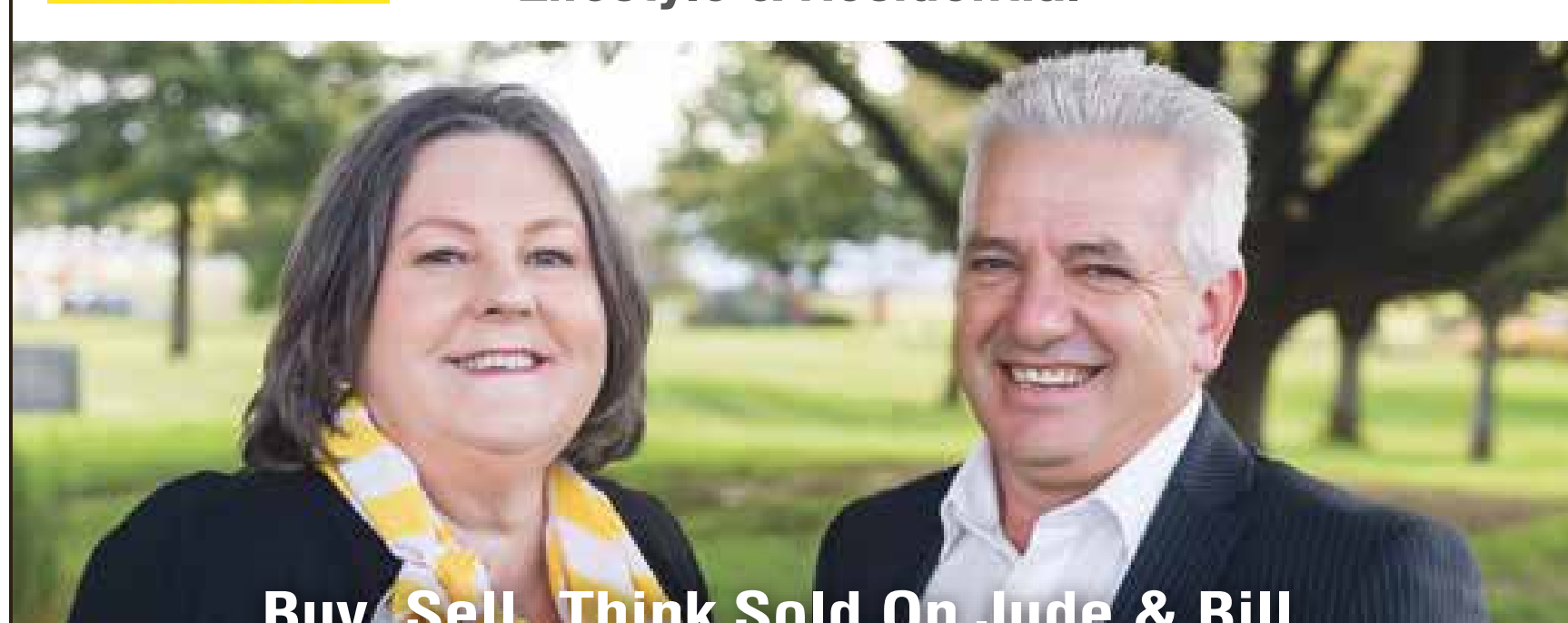
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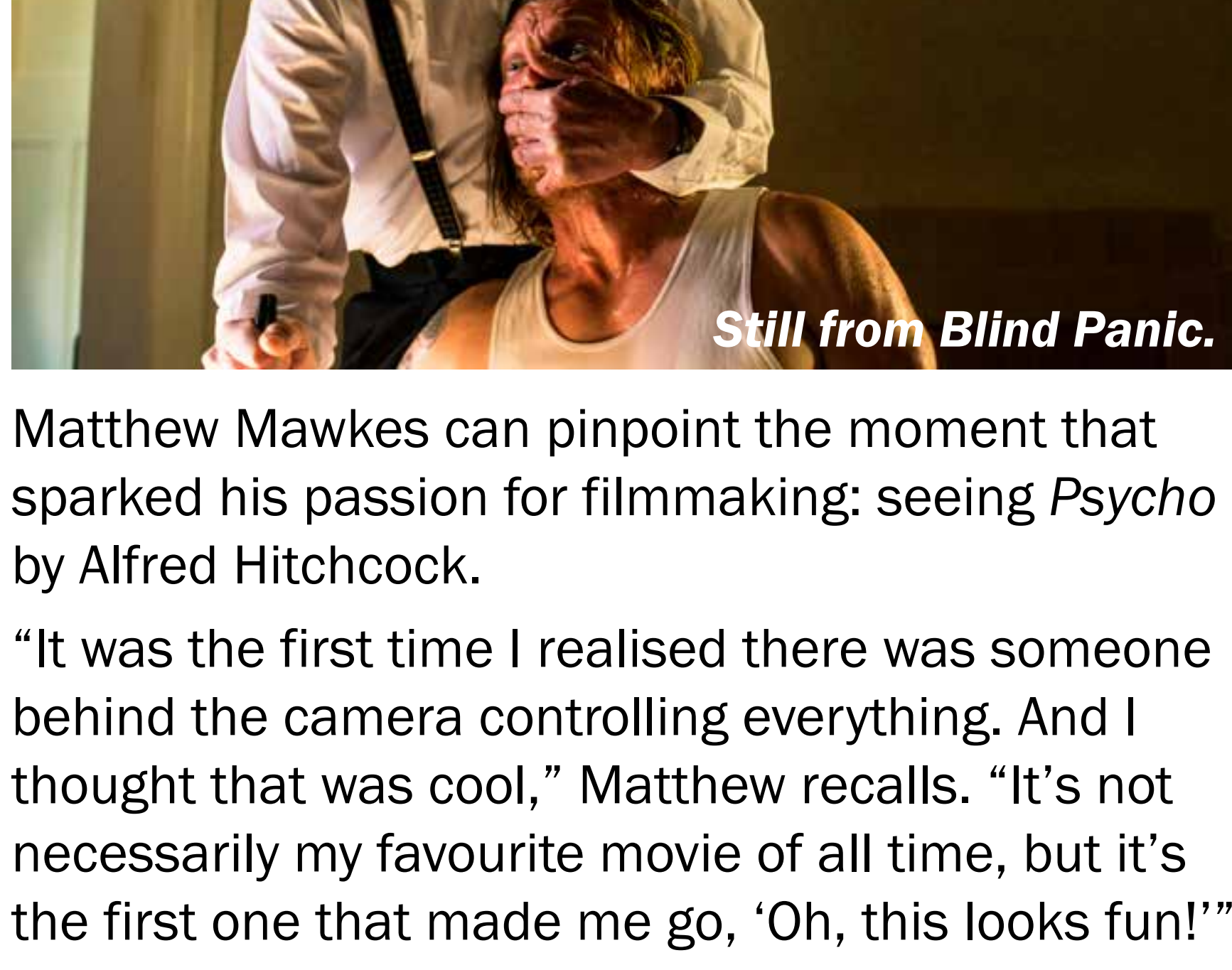
# Wellington Silver Screeners:

## Matthew Mawkes

**In our Wellington Silver Screeners series, Alessia Belsito-Riera shines a spotlight on the movers and shakers working in the film capital of New Zealand.**



*Matthew Mawkes standing in.*



*Still from Blind Panic.*

Matthew Mawkes can pinpoint the moment that sparked his passion for filmmaking: seeing *Psycho* by Alfred Hitchcock.

“It was the first time I realised there was someone behind the camera controlling everything. And I thought that was cool,” Matthew recalls. “It’s not necessarily my favourite movie of all time, but it’s the first one that made me go, ‘Oh, this looks fun!’”

Now located in Brisbane after working in New Zealand’s capital for years, Matthew’s newest film, the crime thriller *Blind Panic*, which he produced and co-wrote with the film’s director Mark Willis, recently premiered at the 2025 Terror-Fi Film festival in Wellington. Funded by a Kickstarter campaign and filmed on a shoestring budget in Wellington over 21 days, *Blind Panic* underwent years of editing and re-shoots before facing a major setback when Mark was tragically killed in May 2023.

With a journey full of ups and downs, Matthew tells me about his past and his future in film, as well as *Blind Panic*, a movie he knows Mark would be proud of.

### **What do you love about filmmaking?**

It’s the *Psycho* thing, actually. It’s about working out the plot and how to keep the audience guessing, on the edge of their seat. With *Blind Panic* being a thriller, the most fun for me was writing it. That’s absolutely where my passion lies. In fact, Hitchcock used to say that he hated making the film, his favourite part was writing it. The rest was a chore, and I couldn’t agree more! Producing and directing was more done out of necessity. For *Blind Panic* director Mark and I, we did it because we knew no one else would give us a green light. So we had to self-actualise it into existence. His passion was always writing and directing, mine was writing, so I became a very reluctant producer. It’s not my natural strength, but when you’re a low-budget filmmaker, you have to do what you’ve got to do to make the movie, because no one else will do it for you.

### **What do you like about writing?**

I get a kick out of it. When you write something and show it to someone and it works, it’s quite magic. It gets your pulses racing. So, I’m stuck now and I’m writing other projects and slowly getting back into it after the *Blind Panic* experience. Any writing I personally get a kick out of. My recent blogging about *Blind Panic* is really fun. I did a journalism paper at Massey University this year and I thoroughly enjoyed that too. Any writing is good writing.

### **When you realised film was a passion, where did you go from there?**

I moved to Wellington from Bay of Plenty because that’s where the film industry was. I studied at Avalon Studios’ film and television school, which is now gone! It doesn’t exist anymore! That was in the year 2000, when Wellington was a very exciting filmmaking place to be with *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy being filmed and released. I was drawn to the city, and I became known as the guy to go to if you want to make a low-budget movie. So, I never really got into those big-budget productions. I was always the grassroots, smell of an oily rag person.

### **What have been some career highlights?**

Mark and I were both assistant directors on a low-budget production called *The Great Maiden’s Blush* during a nighttime shoot. It was out in Lower Hutt at what is now Brewtown, but back then it was just an empty industrial lot. We had fun doing that. I’ve had fun on other film sets, but like I said earlier, low-budget ones. So the career highlights for me have been helping other people out. Not my own productions... they were so stressful. Although I produced a music video for the Wellington band Bullet Belt, and that was really fun. Full heavy, thrash metal; crazy loud, had to have earplugs. It was directed by Jason Howden (*Guns Akimbo*, *Deathgasm*). The heavy metalers were actually kind of nerds. We had two girls on set who were dancers, and they had all this zombie makeup on because it was supposed to be a black and white zine come to life, and they outmetaled Bullet Belt by far. It was really cool to watch!

### **What is Blind Panic about?**

We needed to come up with a low-budget movie idea for our first feature film. So, Mark hatched an idea about a man on home detention. He’s stuck in suburbia and there’s an evil guy from his past circling. And then I had an idea about a blind woman who’s also trapped in suburbia for very different reasons... So we merged those two ideas, and that’s how *Blind Panic* was born. It’s about a man [Louis, played by Erroll Shand] who befriends a blind woman who lives across the street and unbeknownst to her, he’s on home detention and she gets caught up in his past. It’s not a woman-in-peril film, it’s quite different. Our character Madeleine [Jodie Hillock] has a whole past that is revealed throughout the movie. It’s a crime thriller and not many crime thrillers have been made in New Zealand. There have been a few, but our movie has the nerve to take itself seriously. It’s got lots of humour, but it’s not afraid to be a crime thriller, so we’re gonna give you crime and thrills. Mark and I wanted it to feel like it could be set anywhere.

### **Where is it going next?**

The plan now is international distribution. The film is in the hands of Dystopian Films in LA as we speak. We’ll just see how far we can push it. Which is very exciting because realistically, for a movie like ours, we’re talking video on demand and streaming services. That is the way that people consume movies nowadays. We’re hoping to give the maximum number of people the chance to see the movie.

### **Is there any timeline for when Kiwi audiences will be able to see it?**

I’m not sure. We’ll have to wait and see. Keep your eyes open!

### **How would you describe the local film industry?**

Wellington’s film industry is of an interesting dichotomy because there’s huge Hollywood productions coming in and then there is everyone else. So there are two film industries. There’s always something going on. It is still a wonderful place to work and be if you’re into movies, but filmmaking is such a hustle, no matter what level you’re working at.

### **What advice would you give someone trying to crack into the film industry?**

I think it depends on what you want to do, but one piece of advice is to know what you want to do and stick to it, because not everyone should be a director, a writer, or certainly not a producer. Just figure out what it is you’re really passionate about. There are very few directors working full time in New Zealand. So if you want to be a director, that’s cool but definitely prepare to make your own movie on your own steam like I have. If you do want to write, direct, produce, then work hard at it and you will get there, but you might need to move where the work is. Filmmaking is international; it’s worldwide. Everybody loves movies, but the way they’re consuming is changing. I feel like in a world of AI, people will gravitate toward the arts more and more, especially in-person experiences. It was great to see *Blind Panic* on the big screen and hear the audience around me. I heard people gasping and laughing in the right places. Maybe the cinema has got a little bit of life left in it yet; there’s still a place for the movies.

### **What’s next?**

With *Blind Panic*, losing my best friend and co-writer was very tough. So for me, a little bit of recovery was required for getting my spark back. Screenwriting is what I want to do next. I am currently writing a horror movie and a comedy and another thriller. I’ve got three movies on the go. What happens with them? I’m not sure, but I don’t really care. I’ll try to nail one of them and then I’ll see. Watch this space!



# Beware the Cryptkeeper!

by **Madelaine Empson**



Those who head to Valhalla at 8pm on Friday the 30<sup>th</sup> of January will find themselves in a die-r situation when a creepy cavalcade of metal bands lines up to slay and flay the stage from beyond the grave. Or beyond the crypt, to be precise.

*Tunes From The Crypt* features death shenanigans from Slave Cadaver [pictured], gorenoise offensiveness from Vortekke that will hyperblast you into submission, and murderous metalcore from plagued four-piece Cian, with melodeath from Broken By Design smashing the final nail in the coffin. The hammer? A furious blend of distorted riffs and crushing breakdowns.

Slave Cadaver were “conceived back in 2003 in a concrete garage/pit of despair in Aro Valley” drummer Jay Rodeo tells me. “We play a hybrid of classic death metal and old-school grindcore with a good dose of dark humour, British sitcom samples, and psychosis thrown in for good measure. I think it will contrast nicely with the other bands on the night, with styles ranging from melodic metalcore to goregrind, both extreme ends of the spectrum! They’re all newer recently formed bands we haven’t played with before, which will be really cool.”

Slave Cadaver are looking forward to their first show of 2026 at Valhalla, “Wellington’s institution for heavy tunes”.

“Hopefully crowds will enjoy a night of fine music and dancing with some frights and scares from the Crypt, and perhaps even a guest appearance from our original singer, the Cryptkeeper!”

## The complex made clear



The biggest-selling popular science book of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. One that explains the Earth, the universe, and everything in between. Planetology, astronomy, particle physics, the Big Bang, quantum mechanics, evolution... Described by *The Economist* as “Possibly the best scientific primer ever published”, it won its author the Aventis Prize for Science Books and the EU Descartes Prize for science communication.

What else could we be talking about but *A Short History of Nearly Everything* by Bill Bryson?

It’s been more than 20 years since the release of the “Truly impressive” (*The Guardian*) guide, and luckily for us, Bryson still can’t contain his curiosity about the world around him. Enter *A Short History of Nearly Everything 2.0*, a result of the American British journalist and author’s quest to understand how we got from being nothing at all to what and who we are today. Fully updated to reflect the many scientific discoveries made in the last two decades, *A Short History of Nearly Everything 2.0* was published in October 2025.

To celebrate the release, Bryson – who has written 21 nonfiction books exploring not only science, but topics like travel and the English language too – is touring a brand-new show through Singapore, Australia, and Aotearoa. *The Best of Bill Bryson – Live on Stage* will reach The Opera House on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February. In this theatrical, light-hearted, and fun performance, Bryson will make complex subjects compelling and accessible to anyone who shares his interest in... nearly everything!

## Vini, vidi, vici



Comedians across the capital are rolling up their sleeves, donning their armour, and sharpening their (s)words for *Fight Club*, Wellington’s new gladiator-style showdown that is bound to be a knockout.

In this comedy clash, four comics go head-to-head in the most savage artform of all: structured debate. But that’s not all. In these funny frays where the audience serve as judge, jury, and executioner, confidence, cunning, and crowd favour count for everything. You hold the power; you decide who wins, who loses, and who will inch closer to the grand final in November where they’ll be crowned the *Fight Club* winner.

But let’s not get ahead of ourselves. This is just the first-ever round on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January at The Fringe Bar. Your hosts are Madame of Ceremonies Katy Burrows and referee Emma Jean, two 2025 Wellington Raw Comedy Quest finalists who will egg competitors on and ensure no one hits below the belt.

Entering the ring this month are Mo Munn, blending tragedy, honesty, and humour into a style that is both fearless and wonderfully messy; Q Potts, who despite only recently starting stand-up packs a punch; Elliott Lam, a man of many personalities ready to argue with himself much less anyone else; and Wellington humorous heavyweight Jerome Chandrahasen.

Expect unhinged arguments, unexpected logic, and comedians swinging their hottest takes like verbal uppercuts in a trial by charisma. No scripts. No mercy. Maximum tomfoolery.

## Dear World...



Throughout his almost three decade-long career, Scottish comedian Danny Bhoy has racked up rave reviews from all four corners of the globe.

“One of the most sparkling wits in the world”, the *Montreal Gazette* gushes.

“Danny is a cheeky chappy who revels in the ridiculous”, remarks *Beat Magazine*. “His knack for storytelling is second to none”.

“Subtle. Intelligent. Perceptive. Observant. And very, very funny”, *The Scotsman* beams.

As for his newest stand-up special *Dear World...* coming to Wellington’s Opera House on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February, the *Herald Sun* deems Bhoy “at his brilliant best”.

It’s the sequel to his 2015 smash-hit show *Dear Epson...* which Bhoy describes as a hybrid of stand-up and theatre, and it’s coming to Aotearoa following a completely sold-out run at the 2025 Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

But this isn’t the Scot’s first appearance in New Zealand. In fact, he quickly became an audience favourite in 2004. After catapulting onto the comedy scene in 1999 when he took home the The Daily Telegraph Open Mic Award, the biggest national competition in the UK for new comics, he began touring down under in 2003, a move that would cement his reputation as one of the most globally successful and prolific comics in the world.

Often dubbed the stand-up equivalent of Bill Bryson, catch Danny Bhoy for the first time or the hundredth time – you won’t regret it.



# What's on



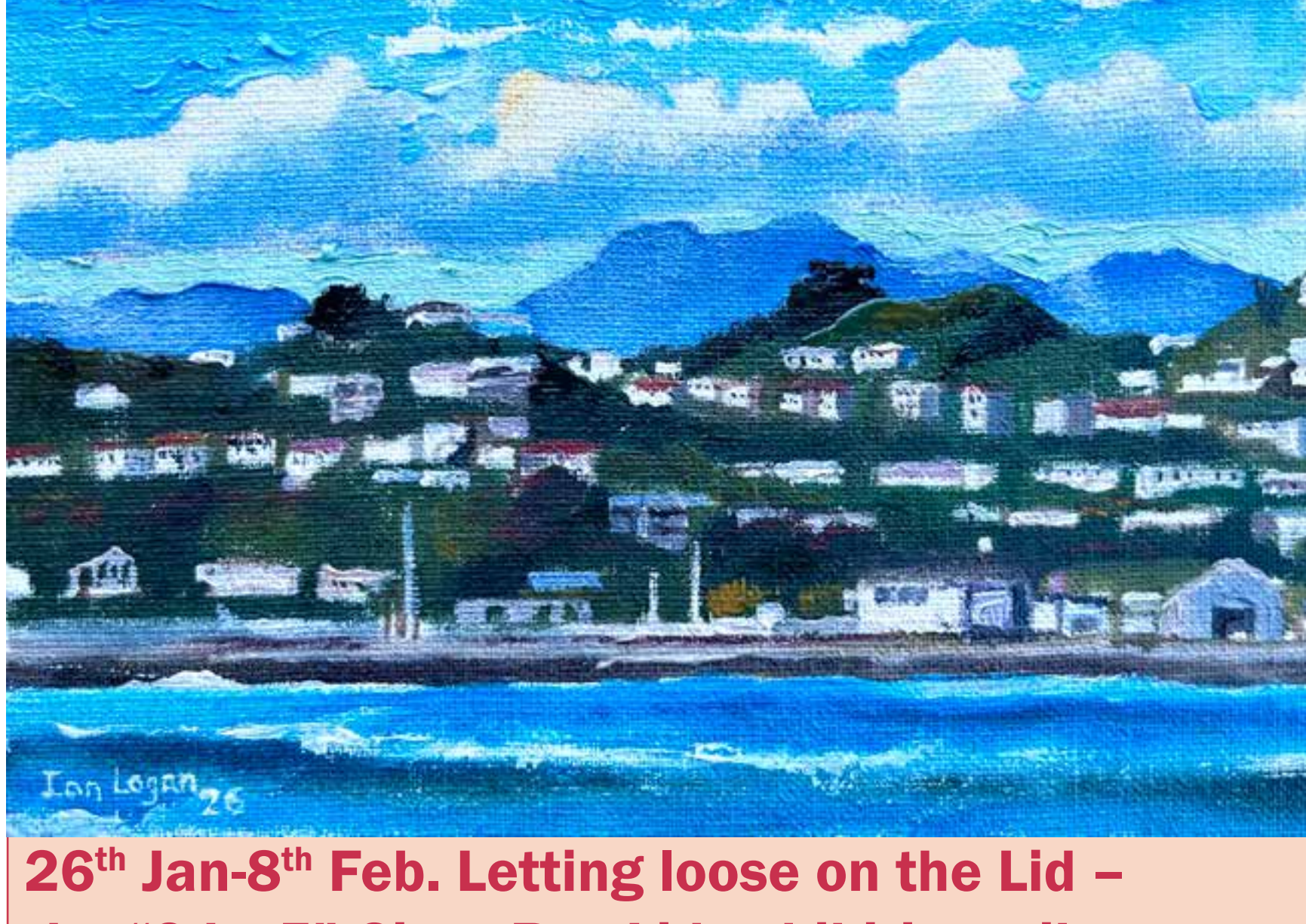
## 31<sup>st</sup> Jan. The Disco Ball – A Mirror Ball Madness

**Drag Show:** *Ivy Bar & Cabaret, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 9:30pm. Dust off your sequins and step into the spotlight! The Disco Ball is spinning into Ivy with a night of unapologetic glamour, high-octane performances, and pure disco drama starring Bobby Bottle Blonde [pictured], Silica Gel, Maria Richman, Nyalas Nancy, Johnny Raven, and Mannntis. **Photo by Kiah DeRose.**



## 12<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Feb. Days Bay Opera Presents:

**The Pearl Fishers:** *Days Bay Opera Canna House, Moana Road, Lower Hutt* – 6:45pm. Madison Nonoa [pictured], Zachary McCulloch, and Kieran Rayner present Georges Bizet's famous opera alongside UK conductor Howard Moody. Staged with a real orchestra and a backdrop of beech forest, experience this masterpiece in a unique setting.



## 26<sup>th</sup> Jan-8<sup>th</sup> Feb. Letting loose on the Lid –

### the “9 by 5” Cigar Box Lid exhibition tribute:

*Studio Te Mapunga, The Esplanade, Island Bay.* Coinciding with Australia Day and the Island Bay Festival, this group show alludes to the famous 1989 exhibition in Melbourne. Artists give their imagination free rein on this compact field of dreams – now updated to modern plywood!

**Detail of From the Cafe by Ian Logan.**



## 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Feb. Hot-ene or Not-ene (Work-In-

**Progress Show):** *The Cavern Club, Allen Street, Te Aro* – 7pm. 2025's Billy T Award winner comes raring into 2026 with a bunch of new jokes. An opportunity for audiences to get a glimpse at a comedian's process, this show will be chocka with diamonds in the rough... and sometimes just a “thought said out loud”, Hotene says.

**Photo by Gareth Bradley.**



## 1<sup>st</sup> Feb. Wairarapa Cinematheque Presents:

**Some Like It Hot:** *Regent 3 Cinemas, Queen Street, Masterton* – 7:30pm. Often cited as the greatest comedy ever made, this crime classic is funny, daring, and endlessly re-watchable. Starring Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis, and Jack Lemmon, the film follows two musicians who disguise themselves as women to escape Chicago mobsters.



## 31<sup>st</sup> Jan. Vietnamese Lunar New Year (Tết)

**Festival:** *The Dowse Art Museum and Dowse Square, Laings Road, Lower Hutt* – 11am. Gallop into the New Year with Viet Hub NZ by celebrating the beginning of the Year of the Horse! Enjoy an outdoor market, live stage performances, cultural games and crafts, a storytelling exhibition, a costume corner, and family fun.



# What's on Wairarapa

**7<sup>th</sup> Feb. Martinborough Fair:** *Various locations in Martinborough* – 8am. Nearly 500 stalls and tents will display an eclectic mix of handmade goods, produce, food, and more under the trees in the picturesque Martinborough Square and surrounding streets.

**8<sup>th</sup> Feb. Greytown Heritage Trust House and Garden Tour:** *Various locations and times in Greytown* – 10am. Explore the beautiful heritage homes and gardens that make up the exquisite and elegant Greytown.

## Kapiti

**31<sup>st</sup> Jan; 14<sup>th</sup> Feb. Black Sheep Animal Sanctuary Open Day:** *Black Sheep Animal Sanctuary, Ōtaki, Kapiti Coast* – 1pm. Meet the animals, learn their stories and how they are cared for, and enjoy a vegan afternoon tea at these open days!

**14<sup>th</sup> Feb. GinFlatables:** *The Bond Store, Birmingham Street, Paraparaumu* – 5pm. Spend Valentine's Day jumping for joy at a gin festival full of bouncy castles.

**14<sup>th</sup> Feb. Sue Thorby & Mr Moondog:** *The Raumatī Social Club, Poplar Avenue, Raumatī* – 7:30pm. Settle in for heartfelt blues and gypsy soul music.

## Events

**30<sup>th</sup> Jan. High Seas Boat Parties:** *Sweet Georgia, Queens Wharf, Wellington Waterfront* – 7pm. Party like a pirate aboard a boat pumping with beats from Chris Keene, The Painter Guys, and Odie.

**31<sup>st</sup> Jan. Homo Before 10:** *Eva Pub, Dixon Street, Te Aro* – 4pm. This high-energy dance event packed with pop remixes, queer anthems, and feel-good bangers will deliver all the fun before bedtime.

**31<sup>st</sup> Jan. Coven: Butch:** *Sweet Axe Throwing Co., Kent Terrace, Te Aro* – 5pm. Axe throwing, games, kai, and good vibes collide at this event for sapphic and queer folks.

**1<sup>st</sup> Feb. American Vehicle Day:** *Trentham Memorial Park, Barton Road, Upper Hutt* – 10am. Over 500 cars convene for a showcase featuring music, pinup and hotdog-eating competitions, food trucks, and more.

## Music

**29<sup>th</sup> Jan. Oscar Lavén's Elegant Calamity Orchestra:** *The Rogue & Vagabond, Garrett Street, Te Aro* – 9:30pm. Releasing their recent album to a sold-out crowd at the Wellington Jazz Festival, the Elegant Calamity Orchestra draws together a vibrant collection of musicians from diverse backgrounds.

**31<sup>st</sup> Jan. Brass in the Park:** *Aotea Lagoon, Papakowhai Road, Porirua* – 2pm. Bring the family, grab a picnic, and enjoy a relaxed afternoon of live brass music at this free summer concert.

**31<sup>st</sup> Jan. Skram and Castaway:** *San Fran, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 7pm. Pōneke theatre pop legends Skram have just released their theatrical sophomore album *What Is A Man* and Ōtautahi pop rock crew Castaway have just dropped their sophomore EP *Nondual*.

**31<sup>st</sup> Jan. Sumac:** *Valhalla, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. The three-piece merges crushing heaviness with improvisational freedom to explore the boundaries between structure and chaos.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Feb. Archspire:** *Valhalla, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 7pm. Combining rapid-fire vocals with relentless energy and soaring melodies, Archspire is one of the most innovative and respected forces in modern death metal.

**5<sup>th</sup> Feb. Window Kid:** *Meow, Edward Street, Te Aro* – 9pm. An award-winning UK MC, Window Kid has earned wide recognition for his technical delivery, timing, and ability to elevate a dancefloor.

**6<sup>th</sup> Feb. The Bass Sound Garden:** *Glover Park, Ghuznee Street, Te Aro* – 1pm. This family event marks Bob Marley's birthday and Waitangi Day with an afternoon of music from Afro Delight and RadioActive.

**6<sup>th</sup> Feb. Brazza:** *The Rogue & Vagabond, Garrett Street, Te Aro* – 9:30pm. Brazza fuses Brazilian funk, classic tunes, and original music for a boogie-fuelled show.

**7<sup>th</sup> Feb. Waste Fest:** *Valhalla, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 6pm. Waste Fest has arrived to showcase the pinnacle of heavy music from across Aotearoa.

**7<sup>th</sup> Feb. The Uptakes with Louis TM:** *The Rogue & Vagabond, Garrett Street, Te Aro* – 9:30pm. R&B and soothsayer of soul Louis TM joins The Uptakes to perform a mix of timeless soul classics and bold modern interpretations.

**11<sup>th</sup> Feb. A Place To Bury Strangers:** *Meow, Edward Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. The band's explosive new album *Synthesizer* is built on chaos, colour, and pure DIY spirit.

**12<sup>th</sup> Feb. An Intimate Acoustic Evening with Gregory Alan Isakov:** *The Opera House, Manners Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. The GRAMMY®-nominated singer, songwriter, and musician presents a stripped-down show with musicians and friends of favourites from his studio albums.

**14<sup>th</sup> Feb. Deacon Blue:** *The Opera House, Manners Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. Scottish pop-rock icons Deacon Blue celebrate their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the release of *The Great Western Road*.

## Performance

**Until 21<sup>st</sup> Feb. The Glass Menagerie:** *Circa Theatre, Taranaki Street, Wellington Waterfront* – various times. Deftly blending humour and pathos and suffused with eloquent poetic language, this Tennessee Williams play is a modern classic.

**28<sup>th</sup> Jan. Mon Platon Productions Presents: Triple Threat Comedy:** *BATS Theatre, Kent Terrace, Te Aro* – 7pm. Samantha Hannah, Mo Munn, and Oliver Pol take to the stage for a night of huge laughs.

**29<sup>th</sup> Jan. Fight Club:** *The Fringe Bar, Allen Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. In this gladiator-style comedy showdown, hot takes replace punches and the audience is judge, jury, and executioner.

**30<sup>th</sup> Jan. King vs Queen:** *Ivy Bar & Cabaret, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 10pm. Two drag performers go head-to-head in a three-round battle. Catch Miss Terri and Trudy Madly Deeply slay the stage.

**4<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Feb. Stagecraft Presents: The Book of Will:** *Gryphon Theatre, Ghuznee Street, Te Aro* – various times. *The Book of Will*, by playwright Lauren Gunderson, is a (mostly) faithful retelling of the true story of how Shakespeare's plays were almost lost to time.

**5<sup>th</sup> Feb. Alien Comedy:** *Moon, Riddiford Street, Newtown* – 8pm. Enjoy an assortment of comedians over out-of-this-world pizza and bevies.

**6<sup>th</sup> Feb. He Māori? Te Tiriti and Me Theatre Roadshow:** *Tawa Community Centre, Tawa; Khandallah Cornerstone Community Centre, Khandallah; The Hannah, Te Aro* – 10am; 1:30pm; 4pm. Ihaka Martyn will have you laughing and crying as he weaves together stand-up, waiata, and physical performance to explore the confusion, comedy, and celebration of reclaiming his Māoritanga.

**7<sup>th</sup> Feb. Love Stories: Import Edition:** *The Fringe Bar, Allen Street, Te Aro* – 7pm. Immigrant comedians share hilarious, unfiltered stories of dating, marriage, breakups, and complicated relationships in a new country.

**7<sup>th</sup> Feb. Danny Bhoj:** *The Opera House, Manners Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. *Dear World...* is the sequel to Scottish comedian Danny Bhoj's *Dear Epsom...* and a fusion of standup and theatre.

**7<sup>th</sup> Feb. Caburlesque – Star Wars vs Star Trek:** *The Fringe Bar, Allen Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. Which sci-fi giant will reign supreme in a dance, pole, burlesque, cabaret, and belly dance showcase?

**7<sup>th</sup> Feb. The Giver! A Chappell Roan Drag Show:** *Ivy Bar & Cabaret, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 8:30pm. With Chappell Roan making her Aotearoa debut at Laneway, celebrate the icon she is at a drag show featuring local faves.

**10<sup>th</sup> Feb. Bill Bryson:** *The Opera House, Manners Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. Join Bill Bryson as he shares the major advances of science in a show inspired by the biggest-selling popular science book of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, *A Short History of Nearly Everything 2.0*.

## Sports

**30<sup>th</sup> Jan. Wellington Phoenix v Melbourne City:** *Sky Stadium, Jervois Quay, Wellington Waterfront* – 7pm. Catch the Wellington men's football team face off against Melbourne City FC.

**31<sup>st</sup> Jan. Valiant Pro: Live At The 162:** *The 162, Gracefield Road, Lower Hutt* – 5:30pm. Catch 'The Beast' Jade Priest, Big Frank, Wellington Heritage champion Kyuss, and more at this rowdy wrestling rager.

## Galleries

**Until 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb. Laz Krassel:** *Vincent's Art Workshop, Willis Street, Te Aro*. Artist Laz Krassel presents a solo exhibition of mixed media work.

**Until 7<sup>th</sup> Feb. Những Miền Đất Nhớ | Lands We Remember:** *Te Whare Manaaki o Toda, Cuba Street, Te Aro*. *Những Miền Đất Nhớ | Lands We Remember* is a Vietnamese contemporary art exhibition by Đặng Mậu Tựu presented as part of Viet Hub NZ's Lunar New Year (Tết) Festival celebrations.

**Until 8<sup>th</sup> Feb. Art To Go:** *Wellington Cathedral, Hill Street, Thorndon*. Members of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts showcase their recent works.

**Until 8<sup>th</sup> Mar. Based On A True Story: The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition:** *Te Waka Huia Wellington Museum, Jervois Quay, Wellington Waterfront*. This exhibition celebrates the story behind the first-ever Fat Freddy's Drop album *Based on a True Story*.

**Until 19<sup>th</sup> Apr. Showing the City – One Drawing at a Time:** *Te Papakura Art Gallery, Parliament, Te Aro*. Celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Urban Sketchers Wellington, this exhibition showcases over 100 sketches of the capital.

**27<sup>th</sup> Jan-1<sup>st</sup> Feb. Nontropolis:** *Thistle Hall, Cuba Street, Te Aro*. A nontropolis is an old-world village that grew organically over time. In this exhibition, over 650 artworks and new book *100 Love Stories* showcase the charm of these small towns.

## Festivals

**6<sup>th</sup> Feb. Te Rā o Waitangi:** *Waitangi Park, Cable Street, Te Aro* – 12pm. Commemorate the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi with a day packed full of entertainment, education, and kai.

**6<sup>th</sup> Feb. Waitangi Day in Porirua:** *Te Rauparaha Park, Norrie Street, Porirua* – 12pm. Porirua City Council and mana whenua Ngāti Toa mark New Zealand's national day with a fun-filled afternoon.

**7<sup>th</sup> Feb. Wellington Pasifika Festival:** *Waitangi Park, Cable Street, Te Aro* – 12pm. Experience the sights, sounds, and flavours of the Pacific at this whānau-friendly festival.

**8<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> Feb. Tapu Te Ranga Island Bay Festival:** *Various locations and times in Island Bay*. Discover the creatives of Island Bay at a festival chocka with events and activities for all ages.

**12<sup>th</sup> Feb. Kingston Calling Presents: UB40 With Ali Campbell:** *Waitangi Park, Cable Street, Te Aro* – 3:15pm. Catch UB40, Ali Campbell, Katchafire, The Black Seeds, and Corrella at a fun summer festival along Wellington's iconic waterfront.

**13<sup>th</sup> Feb-7<sup>th</sup> Mar. New Zealand Fringe Festival:** *Various locations and times in Wellington*. The Fringe is the craziest, most vibrant, and bizarre time in our city. Get amongst the chaos and get out of your comfort zone with emerging and established performers.



For your inclusion in the what's on listings email: [whatson@regionalnews.kiwi](mailto:whatson@regionalnews.kiwi). Close off for the next issue's listings is noon Tuesday 3 February

To the best of our knowledge, the information provided to us regarding the above events was correct at the time of press. Our company accepts no liability for events postponed, cancelled, sold out, or otherwise adapted.

## Regional News

Connecting Wellington

### Answers to the puzzles on page 32

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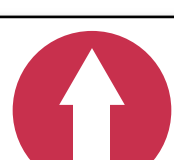
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